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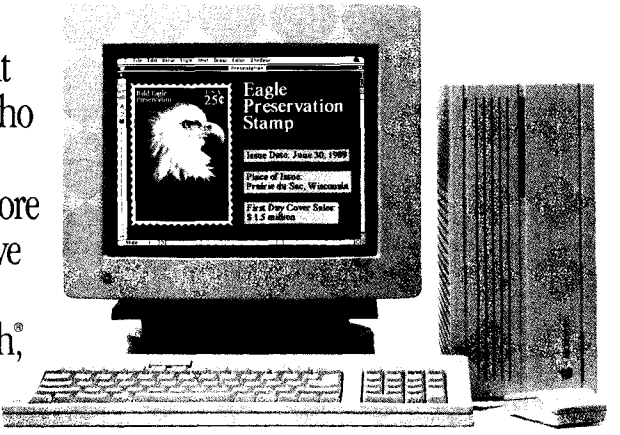

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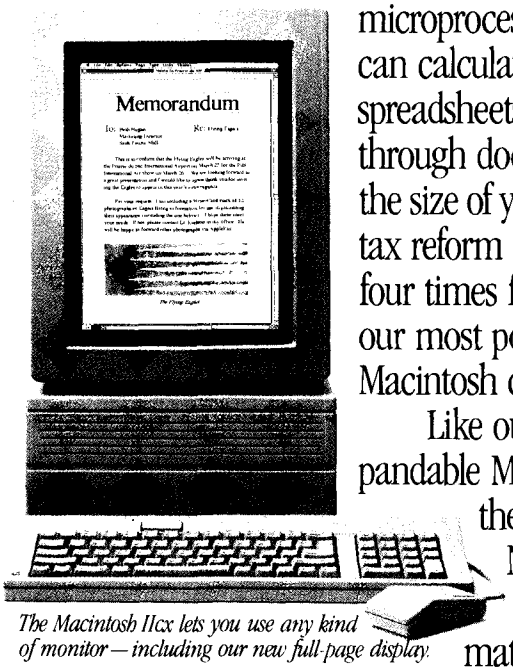

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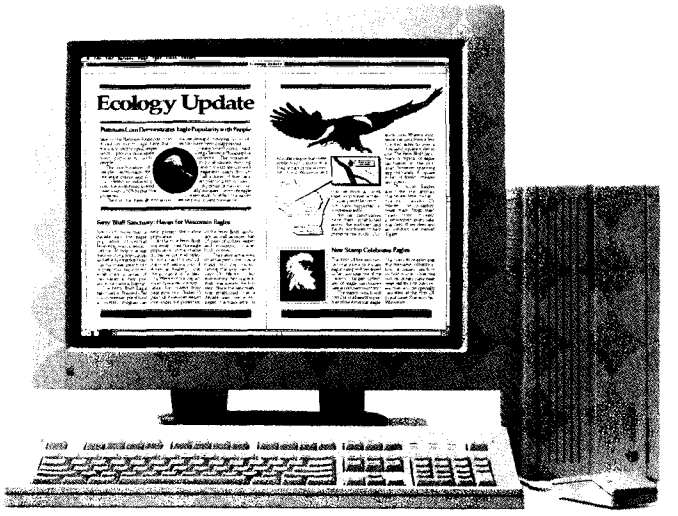

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TRB FROM WASHINGTON

Loophole Patriotism

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." —Exodus 20:3

Maybe when America's politicians—led by the president—are through amending the Bill of Rights, they'd like to amend the Ten Commandments while they're at it, to provide an exception for flag worship.

Democrats in the Senate, led by Majority Leader George Mitchell and Judiciary chairman Joseph Biden, are pushing legislation to ban flag desecration without the necessity of a constitutional amendment. House Speaker Tom Foley also favors this approach. They think they've found a way around the Supreme Court's recent decision to overturn a Texas anti-flag-burning statute.

The Democratic leaders have three motives for their effort, all admirable. First, they want to keep this trivia out of the Constitution, and forestall the first-ever tampering with the Bill of Rights. Senators have introduced no fewer than 38 proposed flag-protection amendments since the Supreme Court ruling. President Bush's version has 53 co-sponsors. According to People for the American Way, of 14 state legislatures still in session as of mid-July, resolutions endorsing a constitutional amendment had passed both houses in six and one house in another six.

Second, these Democrats hope that a hasty bit of legislation will get this ridiculous issue out of the way quickly, before it does any more damage to America's dignity. Third, by "taking the lead" on the legislation option, they hope to make sure that Democrats aren't victimized by Republican flag-waving demagoguery in 1990 as Michael Dukakis was by George Bush in 1988.

Unfortunately, it won't work. There is no way to write a law forbidding desecration of the flag that doesn't violate freedom of speech. Those who are pushing for a constitutional amendment are right: if you can't stand the idea of living in a country where people are free to burn the flag, your only option is to build a gimcrack aluminum-siding addition on the elegant Georgian edifice of the Bill of Rights.

Biden says, "We can protect the American flag—as we must—and the cherished values that the flag embodies" without desecrating the Constitution. How? "Mr. Chairman," he testified, "serious and extensive study has gone into my approach, and each word has been chosen with great care and deliberation." His carefully chosen words are: "Whoever knowingly mutilates, defaces, burns, maintains on the floor or ground, or tramples upon any flag of the United States shall be fined not more than $10,000 or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both."

The gimmick is that by avoiding any reference to the perpetrator's *intent* in burning the flag, or the message conveyed to those watching, the statute saves itself from being an unconstitutional attempt to suppress communication. It forbids specific forms of behavior instead of vague concepts like "desecration." The Texas law overturned by the Supreme Court, by contrast, used the words "defile, damage or ... mistreat" and talked about knowingly giving offense to those watching.

But who's kidding whom, Senator Biden? The reason you want to ban flag burning is that it offends people. It offends you, you say, because the flag "embodies cherished values." Burning the flag therefore dissents from those values. You want to ban flag burning because it conveys an offensive message—an offensive *political* message. Political messages offensive to the majority are the heart of what the First Amendment protects. It doesn't matter how you phrase the law. It doesn't even really matter if some particular form of words might turn a 5-4 Supreme Court loss into a 5-4 victory. You know you're trashing the First Amendment.

Speaker Foley noted the other day that it's illegal to deface a mailbox. He drew an analogy. It's a poor one. There are many sensible reasons for making it illegal to deface a mailbox—protecting government property, preventing interference with the mail—all of which have nothing to do with the message conveyed by the defacing. "Thank God for the Postal Service" flouts the purpose of the law just as much as "Viva Federal Express." The courts rightly allow the incidental suppression of speech—and indulge in all sorts of "balancing tests"—when the government has some legitimate, non-message-related purpose. There is no conceivable such purpose in the case of a ban on flag burning.

The courts also make a narrow exception for speech that risks producing an imminent, violent response. The exception has to be narrow, or this can be an excuse for censoring anything a sizable group doesn't like. There is no reason not to apply this narrow exception to flag burning, as some would like to do. But there's no reason it should apply any more broadly to desecrating the flag physically than to insulting it with words.

By making it illegal to burn the flag for any reason whatsoever, even in private, Biden's bill raises the tricky question of how one would legally dispose of a used flag. Right now, cremation is the official recommended method. Leave it to Governor Mario Cuomo to solve this problem. His proposed New York bill follows the basic Biden technique, but provides that "it shall be an affirmative defense that the destruction or mutilation was for the purpose of disposing of a worn flag."

Cuomo styles himself the philosopher-king of the Democrats, and certainly there is a role in the party for someone who could articulate—and sell—a liberal vision to the country. Is there no one eloquent enough to make people weep with gratitude that we live in a country where people are free enough to burn the flag? And angry at those who exploit patriotic symbols to erode that freedom? Instead, in this case, Cuomo is using his philosophical bent to generate Jesuitical distinctions that allow the Democrats to duck a fight on what the smart ones know in their hearts to be a matter of principle.

Suppose the Supreme Court were to fall for this sleight of hand and hold that flag burning can be outlawed simply because the flag is a national symbol, totally apart from what it says (and therefore what burning it says). This really would turn reverence for the flag into empty idol worship, the building of graven images. And in fact, about 90 percent of the flag hysteria that's been generated in the past year, starting with the Bush campaign, is no more than that.

It's a terribly insecure nation that makes such an unholy fuss about some minor nut burning the flag. As an emblem of love for America, the flag—a mere collage of shapes and colors—is far less eloquent than, say, the Statue of Liberty, which speaks directly of both our values and our history. It's hard to see why images of the flag should be protected from desecration but not images of Miss Liberty—although the Democrats now offer the flag's very inarticulateness as a constitutional defense of sanctifying it. •

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Lech Walesa and George Bush, Gdansk, Poland, July 11. AFP Photo (thought bubbles by Dorothy Wickenden). Articles on pages 11, 20, 21, 27, & 42.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Smoke Screen

To the editors:

THE NEW REPUBLIC's reference to my work against California Proposition 99, in "Blackstabbers" (May 29), had one serious problem—it was pure fiction. Specifically, the line stating that we "produced ads saying that the tax would lead to cigarette smuggling by black California gangs like the Crips and the Bloods" is absolutely untrue.

While our campaign made reference to the fact that street gangs may profit from smuggling cigarettes—as they have in other states—our advertising neither stated nor implied that "*black* California gangs" would be affected differently. We made no distinctions based on people's ethnicity . . . THE NEW REPUBLIC did.

To make his point, Richard Blow invented facts. In the process, he smeared the reputations of myself and those involved with the tobacco industry's campaign. Had this reporter taken the time to check his facts, this damage would never have occurred.

In the interest of truth, I expect THE NEW REPUBLIC to print a full, prominently placed, retraction and apology for these false statements in the next issue.

It is my hope that as a result of this clarification and retraction no legal action will be necessary.

ROGER AILES
Ailes Communications Inc.
New York, New York

Richard Blow replies:

Mr. Ailes is half-right. His ads never explicitly mentioned the Crips and the Bloods. Nevertheless, the implication was clear, especially given that, according to the FBI and the Los Angeles Police Department, those two groups dominate gang activity in California. I would be glad to hear what white street gangs Mr. Ailes was referring to in his advertisements.

Voting Wrongs

To the editors:

In "Kennedy Justice" (June 5), TNR attacks bipartisan federal legislation that would make it easier for citizens to register and vote, saying that it takes a civil rights approach to the problem of voting barriers. In surprisingly sharp terms you say the battle to end racial discrimination has been won and those who pursue it are either misguided or seeking partisan advantage. The trouble with this theory is that the facts get in the way.

First, in response to the rhetorical question "What state in 1989 has discriminatory barriers to registration?" TNR answers, "None comes to mind." A recent report from the Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights, *Barriers to Registration and Voting: An Agenda for Reform*, has a different answer. After six days of hearings in the Northeast, South, and Southwest, the Commission found numerous instances where local officials have designated registration places and hours that make registration far less accessible to blacks than to whites; registrars have required excessive identification of black applicants; Hispanic and Asian Americans have been subjected to undue scrutiny concerning their citizenship; and requirements of dual registration for tribal and state elections or the placement of registration sites off-reservations have necessitated exhaustingly long trips for Native Americans wishing to vote. Such practices are discriminatory under any commonly accepted definition of that word.

Second, after stating that the larger causes of non-voting include poverty and poor education, TNR concludes that there is an "all too common fallacy that all racial disparities are the *direct* result of *ongoing* discrimination" (emphasis added). What an extraordinary effort to make a problem disappear by defining it out of existence. Past discrimination has contributed mightily to the disproportionate representation of blacks and Hispanics in the ranks of the poor. The notion that past discrimination has no continuing effects and that we can all now be color-blind was the Reagan administration's excuse for its shameful failure to enforce civil rights laws and decrees.

Third, in suggesting that the proposed legislation would register minorities and not whites, the editorial grossly misreads the bill's provisions. Its application is national, most (if not all) states would be covered by the legislation, and *all* persons within a covered state would benefit from the measures instituted—mail registration, agency-based registration, among others—to remove barriers.

Finally, the suggestion that the legislation is designed for partisan advantage is flatly wrong. Both Republicans and Democrats have sponsored the bill because they recognize that it gives each party a fair chance to compete for new registrants. This recognition and the introduction of the Cranston-Kennedy bill in the Senate have helped to galvanize

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There's one news analysis program considered "can't miss" by Washington officials. The McLaughlin Group.

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DEMAND-SIDE REFORM

Here is what President Bush says about campaign reform: "Political Action Committees and their $160 million war chest overshadow the great parties of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. . . . We need reforms that curtail the role of special interests, enhance the role of the individual, and strengthen the parties." Here is what Democratic National Committee Chairman Ron Brown says: "[If] you eliminate PACs, you eliminate the opportunity of a lot of small donors to contribute effectively to a campaign." Here is what both men are actually thinking: "PACs give more money to Democrats than to Republicans."

Bush has announced a campaign reform package that, among other things, would prevent PACs sponsored by corporations, unions, and trade associations from giving money to candidates. Only "independent" PACs would still be allowed to contribute. If applied retroactively to the last campaign cycle, the proposed law would eliminate 90 percent of the $160 million in PAC contributions. Since Democrats got $99 million of that, this would be all to the good, so far as Bush is concerned.

If Bush's proposal were merely disingenuous, it would warrant serious consideration. If he could find a way to curtail the generally pernicious influence of PAC money, any minor tactical advantages accruing to the Republicans might be a fair price to pay. But his proposed law is unlikely to have lasting benefits—not even for Republicans, probably, and certainly not for the body politic. It would be just one more finger in a dike that would undoubtedly spring new leaks—as past reforms have done. There are better ways to do what Bush claims to want.

PAC money comes with two biases, and Bush and Brown would each like to harness his preferred bias to partisan ends. First, there is the conservative bias. Naturally, to the extent that money is given free play in a political system, it tends to further monied interests. Also naturally, this skewing of influence away from the one-man, one-vote ideal has typically worked to the advantage of Republicans. That is why, until recently, you did not hear Republicans complaining about the nefarious influence of PACs. But lately corporate and trade association PACs have been giving money to Democrats. The reason is the second bias that modern PAC money carries: toward incumbency. Democrats control Congress. In recent years (led by the late Tony Coelho) they have become skilled at reminding big business that it makes more sense to give money to the people who are in power than to the people you wish were in power.

Bush's proposal is essentially an attempt to reduce the incumbency bias of PAC money, thereby giving free flow to the conservative bias and restoring the Republican Party to its accustomed status as a magnet for money. Bush doesn't want to ban any type of PAC outright; corporate, trade association, and union PACs would still be able to give to the *party* of their choice—just not to the candidate of their choice. The expectation is that, once big business can no longer forge marriages of convenience with individual legislators, it will return to its ideological roots. Brown, for his part, sounds eager to preserve the incumbency bias of campaign money as an antidote to its otherwise natural right-wing bias. This may work for now, but it won't keep working if the Democratic dominance of Congress starts to slip. Nor does it get the party of the people out from under the mountain of contradictions caused by its growing dependence on business-interest money. The most reliable and endur-

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ing defense of the Democrats against big money—and, incidentally, the best thing for the nation—is the elimination of both PAC biases.

No direct, supply-side assault on campaign donations is likely to achieve this. Witness the last major go-round, the post-Watergate campaign reforms. Their limits on individual contributions merely created the monstrous PAC system. Bush's proposal would prove similarly futile. Corporations and trade associations would soon figure out how to leap the Jesuitical divide between a "sponsored" and an "independent" PAC—and undoubtedly would discover other as yet unimagined tricks. The better, simpler route is demand-side reform: sharply reduce the need of candidates for funds, and let them get these relatively insignificant amounts where they will, so long as the source is disclosed.

Unfortunately, the most straightforward demand-side approach is unconstitutional. Post-Watergate legislation to limit total campaign expenditures was correctly deemed by the Supreme Court to be an infringement of free speech. However, the Court did allow government funding of presidential candidates to be made contingent on voluntary acceptance of spending limits. This same gentle arm-twisting technique can be applied to congressional races. This is the approach of a House bill, sponsored by Michael Synar and Jim Leach, that would provide some public financing for candidates who agreed to a spending ceiling. Another House bill, sponsored by Al Swift, would offer candidates greatly reduced postal rates and would compel television stations to offer them rock-bottom ad rates. Again, participating candidates would have to accept overall spending limits. Both of these approaches amount to two-pronged demand reduction: they not only put a ceiling on expenditures but reduce the number of bucks candidates must spend for a given amount of bang. And in both cases, if you accept the subsidy and the limit but your opponent doesn't, your limit would be waived while your subsidy was retained. (In a Senate version there would be no public subsidy unless your opponent refused to accept a spending limit.) This makes for a very strong incentive to participate.

If forced to choose between these two subsidies—public financing and cheap communication—we would take the latter. One reason is that publicly funded campaigns would bring the unsightly spectacle of your tax dollars going directly into the pockets of political consultants and television station owners. This already happens with public funding of presidential campaigns, but at least there is a natural limit. Depending in particular on how third-party candidacies were handled (some allowance for them would have to be made), manufacturing hopeless candidacies could become a growth sector of the politics industry, with the government footing the bill. A safer—and more elegant—approach is simply to make the raw materials of politics cheaper.

In fact why not go further and make TV time, as well as a limited number of mass mailings, free, rather than just cheap? (About half the cost of a typical congressional campaign is paying for television commercials.) The government gives broadcast stations a valuable, scarce public resource—a segment of the broadcast spectrum—for free. Cable networks get a government-granted monopoly in their service area. Not profiting from the democratic process is a reasonable enough price to demand in return.

Free TV time would provide a natural occasion for another great leap backward: toward serious political discourse. The days when people used to complain of politicians being sold like soap are long over: the manipulative genius of modern political ads puts Procter & Gamble to shame. Things have gotten so gruesome that we are ready to embrace a proposal we've resisted for years: content regulation. Any free TV ads should consist only of the candidate addressing the viewer—for at least two minutes. No baritone narrator, no majestic sunsets, no convicted black rapists who do their best work while on furlough. Just a talking head. Two hundred years ago—even 50 years ago—this was the only sort of audio-visual campaigning that was done in America. It worked well.

It is not too late to work these provisions—*free* TV time, along with a talking-heads rule—into the Democratic report that is likely to emerge from the bipartisan congressional task force on campaign reform. In any event, the Democratic report will likely take a stab at demand-side reform, probably by synthesizing the Synar-Leach and the Swift approaches. When the report comes out, expect Bush and other Republicans who are now basking in the fallout from the flag-burning issue to become suddenly First Amendment absolutists. They will say something like this about spending limits (not to mention any content regulation): "In the guise of election 'reform,' these proposals would load the dice in favor of Democratic candidates by shutting off the free flow of information." And these Republicans will actually be thinking: "These proposals would reduce the role of money in politics."

NOTEBOOK

RETURN OF THE SLEAZEBALL WATCH: "I was not responsible for the fact that DRG was, as you say, a bad actor," Carla Hills testified July 17 at House hearings on the HUD scandal. "I was hired as a lawyer . . . not the judge." As a lawyer, Hills—then a former HUD secretary, now U.S. trade representative—persuaded her successor, Sam Pierce, to overrule his staff and allow DRG to issue 80-percent-government-guaranteed loans for housing construction without government approval. This so-called "co-insurance" program was a Reagan administration idea for government-private sector cooperation and blah blah blah. It now appears that the "private sector" routinely inflated the value of the projects, lent way too much money, and then earned

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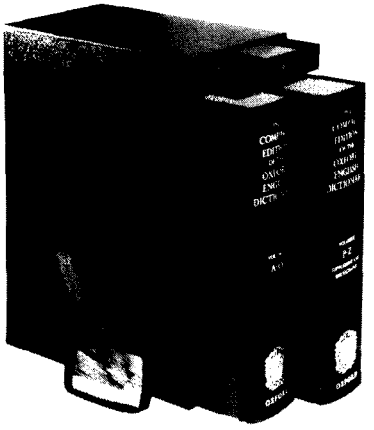

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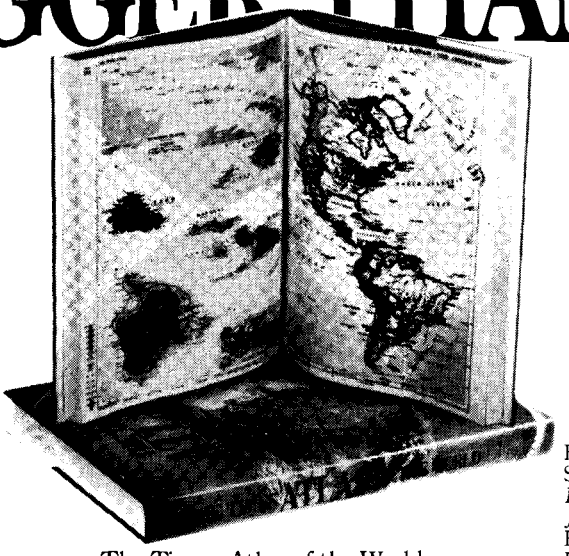

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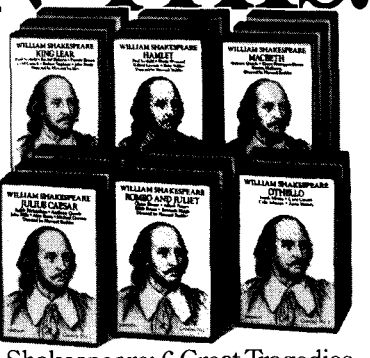

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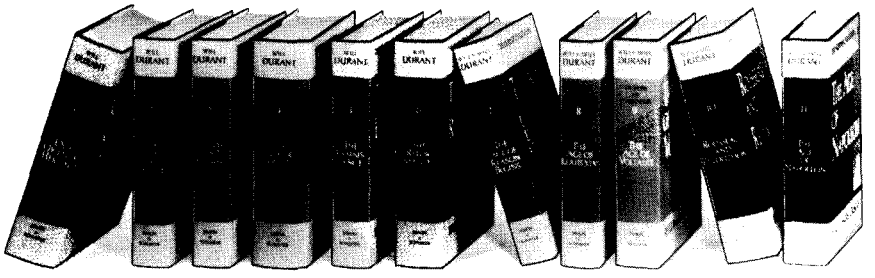

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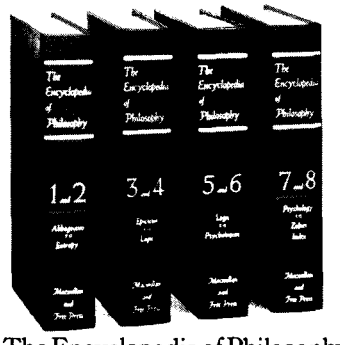

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enough on fees to make up for its own 20 percent share of the loss when the projects went belly-up. In her "only a lawyer" self-defense—and in noting that her fee was only $33,500, compared with ten times that amount for less work by the likes of James Watt—Hills is reverting to an earlier stage in the history of Washington influence-peddling, when the likes of Clark Clifford and Tommy Corcoran quietly worked the phones while insisting they were just practicing law. This may have been more decorous than the frenzied and open trading on connections introduced during the Reagan years, but it is not essentially different. Hills was not hired for her legal skills. She was hired to lean on Sam Pierce. The notion that her law degree gave her a license to practice agnosticism about her lobbying clients is another ancient but false analogy. Lawyers have an ethical obligation to guide even guilty parties through the criminal justice system. But there is no ethical obligation to use your connections to get "bad actors" a meeting with the secretary of HUD. Quite the reverse.

A BILLION HERE, A BILLION THERE:
"The planned 132 [Stealth] planes are to cost an estimated $70 billion." —*Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 11, page 3A
"The cost of sending four people to Mars for 30 days has been estimated at $80 billion (about $10 billion less than the projected cost of 132 Stealth bomber jets)."
—same paper, same day, page 10A
(thanks to Charles Stengel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

MIRACULOUS MIKE: Just a year ago he led George Bush by 18 points for the presidency of the United States. Today Michael Dukakis's popularity rating among the citizens of his own state is barely 18 percent. It's a dramatic decline, but it's not only his. Remember the "Massachusetts miracle"? Well, the sightings at Lourdes turn out to have been more substantial. The Bay State's government now has the second-worst credit ranking in the country, above only Louisiana's. Louisiana! (When adversaries in the Democratic primaries tried to express skepticism about his "miracle," the Duke dismissed them with a petulant wave of the hand: "Get your facts right," he would snap.) Last week, under the duress of the balanced-budget provisions of the Massachusetts constitution, the legislature agreed to raise income taxes by 15 percent while the governor cut spending by nearly five percent. Following the legendary "Washington Monument" principle of budget cutting, which says go for the cuts that will cause the most protest (legend has it that the National Park Service, told it must cut spending, announced it was closing the Washington Monument), Dukakis has left the state's bloated bureaucracies alone and instead has sliced programs such as assistance to families caring for aging Alzheimer sufferers. Some state parks are sure to be closed and toxic dumps will go uncleaned. Over the past six years Dukakis has raised state expenditures by 70 percent while prices have risen by only 20 percent. Like Ronald Reagan, he was counting on a painless revenue increase from "growth" that never happened. Massachusetts has little to show for this spending spree. Even the Duke's favorite claim of success—that he had reduced poverty through a job training program called ET—has been undermined by a study just released by his own office. It turns out the family poverty rate in Massachusetts dropped by less than a fifth of one percent in eight years—during a period of tremendous economic growth and low unemployment. (While the median income for Hispanics nationwide rose 38 percent during that period, in Massachusetts it dipped 40 percent.) Dukakis was his usual self as he summed up the bad news for the public: he blamed the state's troubles on others.

SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR:

Prudential Near Accord On Thomson
—*New York Times*, July 17

Pru-Bache Ends Merger Accord With Thomson
—*Wall Street Journal*, same day
(thanks to Jim Capozzola, Washington, D.C.)

JUNK HEADS:

Rush to Junk Bonds May Be Onto Thin Ice
—*Los Angeles Times*, July 12, first business page

Long-Term Yields on Junk Bonds Outweigh the Risks, Report Says
—same paper, same day, same page
(thanks to Ellen Strenski, Los Angeles, California)

HOW ABOUT THAT FRENCH REVOLUTION, Mr. President? Margaret Thatcher had harsh words for the French Revolution during the Paris summit, noting that the Greeks and the British had produced many of the same ideas earlier, and without all the unpleasant side effects. You may challenge her analysis, or her tact. But can you imagine President Bush (or almost any other American politician) expressing any spontaneous opinion whatsoever about the French Revolution? Bush, a product of the best the American education system can offer (Andover and Yale), is not necessarily more ignorant of history than Thatcher. But he is also the product of a political system that drains politicians—or at least the successful ones—early on of the temptation to play with ideas. It would simply never occur to Bush to have a strong view on the French Revolution, let alone loose one on the world. If he felt the need of such an opinion—in preparation, say, for a press conference question—he would assemble his advisers. The ramifications would

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be analyzed eight ways to Sunday. Functionaries would be deputized to read (or perhaps simply to call up) Simon Schama. After vast outlays of time and taxpayers' money, a balanced sentence or two would be distilled.

MEDIA MERGERS: This is a combined issue. TNR will not publish next week so that the editors can decide whether to make a hostile bid for Time Warner.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

AFFABLE ABROAD

By Fred Barnes

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS

At his first substantive meeting in Hungary on July 12, President Bush confronted two very uptight Communist reformers: Party Chairman Rezso Nyers and General Secretary Karoly Grosz. They sat across from him in a room overlooking the Danube. Bush started with small talk about how pleasantly cool the weather was. Secretary of State James Baker whispered in his ear, and Bush added, "Baker says it's never hot when you come from Texas." Then Bush got serious. "We're with you," he said. "What you're doing is exciting. It's what we've always wanted. We're not going to complicate things for you [by arousing the Soviets]. We know that the better we get along with the Soviets, the better it is for you." This seemed to wash their anxiety away. "You could see the sense of relief on their faces," a Bush aide said.

That's the Bush approach—cheerful, undemanding, empathetic, accommodating, unfailingly friendly. Bush doesn't like meetings that make him, or anyone else, tense and uncomfortable. So he didn't have any on his ten-day trip to Poland, Hungary, France, and the Netherlands. Everyone he met, Communists and democrats alike, liked him, or at least Bush aides thought everyone did. One reason is that Bush didn't apply pressure. He didn't lean on anyone. He prefers to make other leaders happy.

The Bush style is great for selling Bush. My guess is he'll soar now in popularity polls in Europe, maybe even topping Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. It's also fine for a time when the economies of the big industrial democracies are strong and the Soviet empire is fragmenting. But if things go sour in the world, look out. And if Bush needs to convey a controversial policy, as President Reagan sometimes did successfully, being nice to everyone won't be sufficient. Reagan imposed a tough anti-terrorism stand on the allies in 1986. Earlier he made them swallow the Strategic Defense Initiative. At the economic summit in Paris, Bush's next stop after Hungary, his boldest move was to get attention paid to Eastern Europe. He succeeded, but the achievement was a small one.

The nearest thing to an awkward moment on Bush's trip occurred at his first stop in Warsaw. On July 10, at the end of a luncheon that brought together Communist officials and their Solidarity foes, Bush gave an impromptu toast. Then Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski rose to propose one. Solidarity members, many of whom were jailed when Jaruzelski declared martial law in 1981, squirmed. Should they rise at the end of the toast? American officials noticed their discomfort and grew fretful as Jaruzelski talked. The Americans feared the luncheon would break up in anger and embarrassment. Jaruzelski averted danger. He proposed a toast "to the good health of Barbara Bush and all the ladies present with us here today." Everyone had to rise and applaud this.

To the surprise and delight of Bush's entourage, the president rarely had to tell other leaders what they didn't want to hear. Jaruzelski made things easy for him by spelling out all of Poland's troubles. He said the Communist system isn't working, economically or otherwise. He cited Poland's agricultural backwardness—all small farms on which it's impossible to achieve economies of scale. Bush spared Jaruzelski trouble by not repeating his assertion, made in an interview before he left Washington, that Gorbachev should pull all Soviet troops out of Poland. That would be provocative, counterproductive even, an aide explained. "Our objective isn't to talk about the Soviets leaving Eastern Europe," the aide said. "Our objective is to get the Soviets to leave."

In Budapest, Bush was amazed at what he heard from Nyers, the first among equals in the four-man presidium that runs Hungary. "We have to get rid of the dead hand of statism," Nyers said. After 40 years of communism, the way people think in Hungary must be changed, he went on. All Bush could do was nod. Then Nyers said, "The great test for our party is whether we're willing to put our case before the people in an election." Bush couldn't argue with this either. Nyers said Hungary is in the position the United States was in 1776. Bush liked the analogy.

Bush arrived with a head of steam at the Paris summit of the United States, France, Britain, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Canada. At the opening session he was the first leader called on by French President François Mitterrand, the host. This was the most informal meeting at the summit, the one at which the seven leaders talked about whatever was on their mind. Bush talked about Eastern Europe. He said the West has a "historic opportunity" to change the face of Europe by sweeping away the Iron Curtain. But the allies have to stick together and get actively engaged in helping Poland and Hungary as those countries cast off communism. He said the summit countries should meet later to figure out how to provide joint aid.

This was problematic. In preliminary discussions,

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Bush's representative had pushed the idea and gotten nowhere. The Germans and the French were opposed. So a follow-up meeting on Poland and Hungary was not called for in the draft communiqué. The next day Bush jumped at the chance to get it in. West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl proposed a follow-up meeting on giving food to Poland. "It shouldn't just be Poland," Bush said. "It should include Hungary. And it shouldn't just include food. It should have a broader range of aid." This was the boldest Bush got at the summit. To his surprise, Mitterrand endorsed his plan, saving it from rejection.

Mitterrand's intervention was a measure of his friendship with Bush, according to the president's aides. He and Bush got along famously when Mitterrand visited Kennebunkport and Boston in May. Bush wanted to take Mitterrand on a boat ride, but he backed off politely when Mitterrand balked. (Mitterrand hates boats.) A few days later an authoritative-sounding piece in *Le Monde* reported how impressed Mitterrand had been by Bush. At the NATO summit in June, Mitterrand rebuffed his own bureaucracy and sided with Bush at one point. And in Paris, Mitterrand also rushed to Bush's side when Italian Foreign Minister Guilio Andreotti tried to soften the communiqué's mention of "the Soviet threat." Andreotti said the word "potential" should be added. "There's no potential threat," said Bush. "There's an enormous standing army." Mitterrand offered the word "objective." Bush readily agreed, and "objective threat" is what got in the communiqué. "I wish we'd thought of that," said an American official.

Bush has also drawn close to Thatcher. He loves to watch her take apart questions from reporters. She invited him for breakfast whenever he passed through England as vice president. In June, Bush stopped off after the NATO summit for his first presidential visit. After a session at No. 10 Downing Street, he and Thatcher met the press. For days British papers had been writing about the end of the "special relationship" between the United States and Britain. The first question was on this subject, and Thatcher delivered a dazzling rebuttal. All Bush could say was that he liked what she'd said. In Paris he met with her privately for more than an hour at the American ambassador's residence. Afterward, he broke his own rule about no questions at photo opportunities. He said it was "a modified photo op in honor of our distinguished guest, who will be glad to take questions." I suspect his real motive was to watch her batter a pool of reporters.

Mitterrand and Thatcher are hardly alone among world leaders who are esteemed by Bush. He even admires dead Communists. In an interview with Hungarian journalists in Washington, he praised Janos Kadar, who was installed as leader of Hungary by the Soviets in 1956. Kadar died in June. "We might get all kinds of argument in our political right or our political left about Mr. Kadar, but I look at him as a man who served his country," Bush said. Actually, right and left agree Kadar was the "butcher of Budapest." In Poland and Hungary, Bush liked the Communist leaders better than their political opponents. The opposition parties in Hungary, said a Bush aide, are relics of the 1940s. The Communists "are thinking like politicians now."

What the Europeans find all the more endearing about Bush is that he's not a lone ranger like Reagan. There's no Bush doctrine. John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, used that phrase to describe Bush's policy of aiding Communist countries to the extent they adopt democracy and capitalism. But national security adviser Brent Scowcroft instantly repudiated it. "Bush's approach is we've got to all be together," said an official traveling with Bush. "So it's no good to have a unilateral doctrine."

Holland was perfect as Bush's final stop. His visit was strategically unimportant, but historic—no president had been there before. He was among friends. "Friendly relations between our two countries have endured uninterruptedly for over 200 years," said Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Den Broek. Nothing but kind words were expected of Bush, which is what he likes to deliver.

POSTCARD PHOENIX

How hot is it?

By Jeffrey Toobin

It doesn't take long for new arrivals like me to pick up Phoenix's unofficial motto: "Yes, but it's dry heat." More than a tad defensive we Phoenicians are about our climate. Once summer has started, we can't expect the temperature to drop to the double-digits for four, maybe five months. Yet like children with guilty consciences, the more we try to camouflage the bad news, the more we call attention to it.

Take this year's attempt to humanize the summer, the "iceberg" Phoenix Grand Prix, four days of Indy-type cars dragging in the June heat through the deserted streets of downtown. The *Arizona Republic*, part of the Pulliam (i.e., Quayle) newspaper empire, shamelessly hyped the race for weeks, issuing grave warnings about ticket scarcity and hotel overcrowding. City elders even induced a sweater company called Iceberg to sponsor the event. But come post time, the vast cement grandstands baked in empty serenity. The television coverage focused principally on the driver who wrapped his helmet in tinfoil to deflect some of the sun's rays.

Meanwhile, the natives advise me to crank up the evaporative cooler (air conditioning here is passé), and to flee to San Diego for the weekend. (To accommodate the influx of Arizonans, the *Republic* is sold at the San Diego airport.) And they recommend observing local

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customs. For example, when doing errands, always go to the dry cleaner last. If you leave the hangers in your car, the bags melt on your clothes.

Though the weather's probably not to blame, the Republican Party is close to self-immolation. The unifying idol of Ronald Reagan accommodated both the social-issue conservatives and the pro-business traditionalists, but the tensions among these groups threaten to destroy the Republicans here. Just as our weather may foreshadow the post-greenhouse United States, the party of Evan Mecham may augur the post-Reagan GOP.

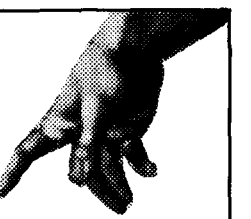
The problems begin with the return of Mecham himself. During his 16-month term, he did his best to make Arizona a laughingstock. He said "pickaninny" was a "term of endearment" used by black mothers, and claimed that the state attorney general was bugging his office with "lasers." Now the former Pontiac dealer not only has filed a cockamamy lawsuit to have his impeachment overturned; he has declared his candidacy in the 1990 governor's race. Name recognition, at least, will not pose a problem.

But Mecham will be seeking resurrection without the aid of Annetta Conant, spiritual leader of the fundamentalist Christian wing of the party, formerly Mecham's bread and butter. Conant, who cut her political teeth on the fight to legalize Laetrile, garnered her own notoriety when she headed the drive earlier this year for the Republicans to declare the United States a "Christian nation"—a mission in which she succeeded thanks in part to help from her pen pal, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. (In a letter of support to Conant on the "Christian nation" initiative, O'Connor cited three unrelated Supreme Court precedents—thus combining dubious ethics with weak law.)

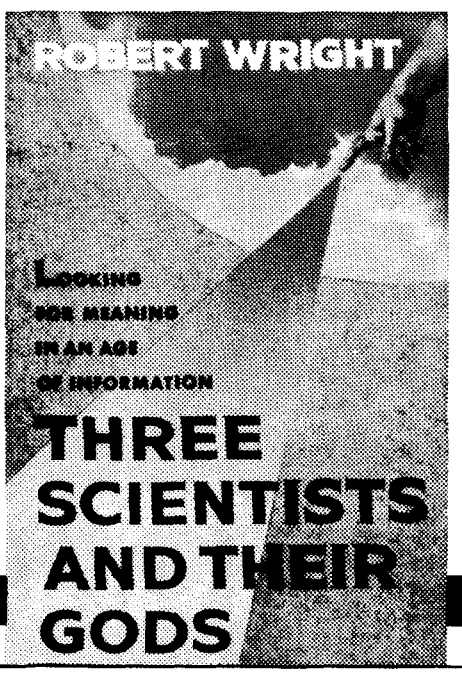
Conant, however, has abandoned Mecham because, as she told the alternative weekly *New Times*, he is a Mormon. She said fundamentalists would oppose Mecham because many of them regard Mormonism as a cult, not a religion. "Concerned Christians have all of this documentation," she explained. (The Mormons take all of this pretty seriously. When the *Republic*'s cartoonist published a drawing called "The Second Coming," which showed a haloed Mecham preaching from "The Book of Moron," the artist was stripped of his church duties.)

Panicking, the Republican establishment enticed someone named Fife Symington, a hitherto unknown developer, to run in the primary against Mecham. Sanctified with the endorsement of Barry Goldwater, patron saint of the state party and a moderate by Arizona standards, Symington has become the favorite by de-

"A SMASHING DEBUT...



If you've never read a whole science book through at one sitting, *Three Scientists and Their Gods* may change that. . . In format, tone, and panache, Wright's book takes popular science literature where few such enterprises have gone before." —Carlin Romano, *Philadelphia Inquirer*



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fault, especially if Conant pursues her threat to run a "Christian" of her own. Goldwater recently dismissed Conant and her allies as "kooks." Serene and a little scary, Conant responded that the epithet stands for "kindred of our King."

All of this leaves the incumbent Democrat, 67-year-old former Secretary of State Rose Mofford, sitting pretty. Her mountainous silver bouffant, which makes her resemble the long-lost mother of Beldar Conehead, caused many to underestimate her. Yet she has brought a calming sanity to the Capitol. She even closed a budget gap by maneuvering the Republican-controlled legislature into sponsoring a tax increase this year, thus saving herself from the tax-and-spend label fatal to Democrats here and elsewhere. Don't bet against her.

Mecham first gained national attention when he repealed the state's Martin Luther King Day holiday. Outsiders may assume that his action was promptly overturned after his departure. Not so. His revocation did cause a tumult (many groups noisily canceled conventions in the state and have continued to stay away), but Arizona remains one of four states that does not observe the King holiday.

In its singular style, Arizona celebrates both Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays, instead of the combined federal holiday. (We also forgo daylight-saving time.) On the last day of the legislative session, a final swing senator came around in support of a bill that, unaccountably, kept the Washington and Lincoln fetes but ditched Columbus Day. "Things got a little odd at the end," says Arnie Zaler, chair of the black-Jewish coalition that has led the fight for the King holiday. But at the last minute the Senate president, Bob Usdane, refused to allow the King bill to come to a vote. Zaler's group is now pressing Mofford to call a special session of the legislature.

But not until October. "Nobody," says Zaler, "wants to come to Phoenix in the summer."

JEFFREY TOOBIN was recently associate counsel in the office of independent counsel Lawrence Walsh.

Crunch time for America's Mideast peace plan.

ENEMIES OF PEACE

By Morton M. Kondracke

Every American peace plan for the Middle East is threatened with suffocation at some point. And all have succumbed, except Camp David. The Bush plan's rendezvous with suffocation is now. That plan is to prod Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization toward West Bank elections, toward indirect talks (and, maybe, direct talks eventually), and, finally, to an as-yet-undefined political settlement involving Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian self-rule. After a promising birth, including sponsorship of the elections idea by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the continuation of a U.S.-PLO dialogue, the Bush plan is in crisis.

American diplomacy has lost its forward momentum and is menaced from all sides. The PLO won't support elections without a guarantee that they will lead to an independent Palestinian state. Israel's dominant Likud party flatly rules that out, and hard-liners want to sabotage both the elections idea and U.S.-PLO talks. Suspicions have developed on the American side over tactical errors by the administration's point man, Secretary of State James Baker. And violent extremists seem to be gaining the upper hand among both Israelis and Palestinians. Just back from Europe, Bush has got to act soon to keep his Middle East policy from dying in infancy.

How? Three ways. First, he needs to scare everybody with reminders about how horrible the consequences would be if American policy collapses. That is, there will be unending terrorism and tribal warfare, and a deterioration of life for both Jews and Arabs. Next, he needs to threaten each side with the onus of responsibility for the collapse, if it occurs. And third, he should remind them that the elections-to-peace channel is the only one that's now open and the only one there is likely to be.

If the administration is going to lean harder on one side than the other, now is the time to lean harder on the PLO rather than Israel, which has been the target of most of Baker's blows recently. The PLO has the most to lose if American policy fails. Even though the Arab *intifada* has caused woe in Israel, it is mostly killing Palestinians. Israel controls the West Bank militarily, and as long as fear of terrorism keeps driving politics in Israel to the right, military rule will get harsher. Palestinian moderates will lose out to Islamic extremists. In the worst-case scenario—a far-right takeover in Israel by Ariel Sharon—Arabs could be expelled ("transferred" is the official euphemism) en masse from the West Bank. That would be a moral and political catastrophe for Israel, but it would mean the loss of everything for the Palestinians.

The administration ought to pressure the PLO, too, because it's the party that has not budged from its fundamental position on elections. The PLO seems to think that if it waits long enough, the United States will force Israel to agree in principle to the creation of a Palestinian state. After all these years the PLO still hasn't gotten the point that it's politically impossible for an American president to force Israel to do anything that seems dangerous to its national interest, unless an Arab party has done everything possible first to demonstrate good faith. President Bush surely does not want to sour his presidency in its first year by picking fights with Congress and American Jewry.

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Most important, the PLO has the most to gain if American policy succeeds. This plan is a cousin to the Camp David Accords that the PLO foolishly rejected in 1979. Had the PLO accepted then, it might have a Palestinian state today, in one form or another. If the PLO took Yitzhak Shamir up on his elections proposal today, and bargained in good faith for peace, it could get a state sometime in the future. Or if Israel balked, then the PLO could expect the United States to apply full pressure on Israel.

Unfortunately, instead of insisting now that the PLO move toward elections, and waiting until later to fight with Israel, Baker has offended the Israelis and their supporters in Washington by seeming to tilt in the Arab direction. His May 22 speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (the Israel lobby) actually was carefully balanced. He told both Israel and the PLO that they should abandon their maximum ambitions—permanent ownership of the West Bank ("Greater Israel") and the recapture of all of Palestine, respectively. But the Israelis took immediate offense at Baker's failure to make the traditional warm remarks about the closeness of U.S.-Israeli relations.

In April, Baker gave permission for the American ambassador to Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau, to talk to anyone in the PLO he saw fit. Pelletreau held two meetings last month with Salah Khalaf, better known as Abu Iyad, the PLO's second-in-command, who has been repeatedly identified as the planner of terrorist incidents, including the 1973 killing of the American ambassador to the Sudan. The PLO leaked word of the Khalaf-Pelletreau meetings, whereupon the White House (terming itself "less than pleased" with State) ordered the contacts stopped. Supporters of Israel spread word of Baker's embarrassment, and Senators Jesse Helms and John Kerry sponsored legislation to forbid U.S. meetings with known PLO terrorists.

Baker also opened himself up to attack by implying, in an interview aboard his plane on its way from Brunei to Oman, that if Israeli hawks undermined Shamir's and the administration's peace plan, the alternative might be an international peace conference, the PLO's preferred forum for Middle East diplomacy. Baker was reacting angrily to the decision by Shamir—caving in to pressure from hard-liners Ariel Sharon and David Levy in the Likud central committee—to poison the election proposal with extreme conditions he knew would be unacceptable to the PLO. But again the White House disapproved ("counterproductive," aides said of his action), and Baker recanted in various press appearances in Europe. Baker had a right to be mad. His mistake, though, was to encourage the PLO to believe that an international conference is a viable alternative to elections, which it isn't.

All this doesn't mean that Israel should be babied. The administration needs to unmistakably resist Israeli efforts to shut down all dialogue with the PLO. It also needs to remind Israel that there will be dire consequences—in terms of American aid and political support—if Shamir proves in the end to have the same ruthless policy toward the Palestinians that Sharon does. Congress is in no mood right now to punish Israel, but even strong supporters of Israel admit that support is eroding. For the first time there has been discussion in the House Appropriations Committee about having a floor debate on aid levels for Israel, and one committee member (usually pro-Israel) said: "If there were a secret ballot, aid would be cut severely. It's not out of affection anymore that Israel gets $3 billion a year. It's from fear that you'll wake up one morning and find that an opponent has $500,000 to run against you."

Public threats and hardball tactics probably shouldn't be applied to either side right now. There is still a chance that earnest warnings and intense persuasion can save Bush's Mideast diplomacy from becoming a target for opponents of a just Middle East peace on both sides. The president, however, has got to take a personal hand in getting the process moving again.

A sordid end to the empire.

BRITAIN'S SHAME

By Michael Elliott

A Briton traveling to Hong Kong makes a journey to his own past. Within the living memory of most of us, the globe was dotted with cities where the British had spun the web of imperial attitudes. Their social lives approximated the domestic arrangements of some idealized Surrey of the mind. As late as the 1950s the Colonial Office was still recruiting the best and brightest from Oxbridge. A 1960s graduate entering "commerce" could expect to find himself posted to a company outpost in one of the countries of Africa or Asia where Britain still had captive markets for goods nobody else wanted.

Now only Hong Kong is left. It is as if this tiny colony (not a word now in polite usage—the approved term is "territory") had become a focus for all the remaining imperial instincts of the British. My father-in-law worked there before the war, and escaped at the last minute from the Japanese. He and his wife went back again in 1945 and, years later, in a Devon garden, could make postwar Hong Kong sound a place of magic. Today more of my British friends live in Hong Kong than in any city but London. Its night clubs and restaurants are full of young British teachers and certified accountants. It is the last place on earth where the British can be adventurous in comfort, living a life both mysterious and familiar.

In fact, there are now more American businessmen in

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Hong Kong than British. Hong Kong's economy depends on its links with China and Japan far more than those with Britain. The United States and West Germany take more of its exports than Britain does. If all of Hong Kong's people could leave the territory, most would go to Vancouver or Sydney or Los Angeles, not to London's drizzle.

But I went to Hong Kong because the saga of empire has one last chapter to play out. Regardless of the economics, only Britain has special responsibilities for Hong Kong. All but two percent of Hong Kong's landmass is leased from China to Britain. The lease runs out in 1997. In 1984 Britain and China agreed that the territory should be handed over to China, which would make Hong Kong a "Special Administrative Region," in which its capitalist way of life would be inviolate for 50 years.

Many of Hong Kong's people have always been suspicious of the Sino-British agreement, but since the June atrocities in Beijing the mood has turned to something closer to panic. Martin Lee, a lawyer who sits on the Legislative Council, and who is the forefront of Hong Kong's fight for better guarantees of freedom, puts the matter starkly: If Hong Kong's people demonstrate for democracy like the Beijing students, will they too be killed? Two-fifths of Hong Kong's population is made up of refugees from China—like Lee's family. They know, even if most of the rich world's Sinologists had (until June) forgotten, how murderous the Chinese Communists can be. So they are taking obvious precautions. In a formal Chinese garden, I spoke to a 27-year-old manager on the Stock Exchange. I asked her how many of her friends had left. "This block," she said, "has 32 apartments. Half are now empty."

The rich can leave. But there is another Hong Kong, a few miles away from the familiar skyline of capitalism in the raw. On the Oi Man housing project, north of Kowloon, tower blocks decorated with a thousand washing lines surround an inadequate shopping center. Double-decker buses take workers into the city. Old men play Chinese checkers. Their sons and daughters know that they will have to stay. Not one I spoke to looked to the future with anything but fear.

These are people who recently have been goaded out of a political apathy that the colonial power found comforting. As long as they sullenly accepted their lot, the British Foreign Office could assert that the Sino-British agreement was a masterpiece of diplomacy. Not now. Since June 4 they have flown black flags and worn black arm bands in mourning for Beijing's dead. Hundreds of thousands have attended rallies. Normally rapacious cabdrivers have refused to accept fares from those going to demonstrations. As midnight approached, I watched an endless line of Chinese, many of them in tears, file past a makeshift shrine outside the New China News Agency, the Communists' unofficial embassy in Hong Kong.

Britain owes these people and is going to betray them. About 3.2 million of Hong Kong's 5.7 million people hold British passports—of a sort. Since 1962 these passports have granted no right of abode in Britain. In the case of other ex-colonies, the British have rationalized this lie by saying that, on independence, a British passport-holder in, say, Malawi, would get a valid Malawi passport. But Hong Kong is not being given independence. It is being handed over to the one political system from which its people have most to fear.

In spite of Hong Kong's argument that a right to live elsewhere would be the ultimate guarantee against China treating the colony's people the way it treats its own, the British government continues to deny Hong Kong passport-holders a right of abode in Britain. It is supported by Britain's Labour Party, which once aspired to articulate policy in a more moral tone than the Tories. On July 5, when Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe reported to Parliament after a pointless excursion to Hong Kong, all but a few mavericks agreed with him that there could be no question of relaxing the rules. No reason is adduced for this, other than that the country would not stand for it (which is untested), and that Parliament would not pass such a bill (which is humbug; its members do what their leaders tell them to). Some MPs have had the gall to tell Hong Kong's people that it really was most unhelpful to keep harping about their passports.

As the British Airways plane took off from Hong Kong airport, the video screens showed that day's news from London. Hong Kong's governor was pleading for a right of abode; a Hong Kong businessman was saying that the Foreign Office had the "vision of a bat." Sometimes when the headphones are on, I wonder whether other passenger have heard the same sounds as me; but when I saw a scatter of clapping, I knew that they had. How many of us ever thought that the great game of empire would end with such a sense of shame?

MICHAEL ELLIOTT is political editor of the *Economist*.

WASHINGTON SCENE

ART OF THE VOYEUR

By Timothy Noah

It's another sign of Washington's maturity as a capital, though not one the city would care to brag about. In recent years this has increasingly become a place where people come not to alter or influence political life so much as to experience the thrill of watching it up close.

To be sure, lots of ideological conservatives poured into Washington after 1980 to help advance the Reagan

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revolution. But most of them ended up as cheerleaders rather than doers. When the Heritage Foundation launched an effort to transfer young Reagan political appointees to permanent civil service positions in government, it didn't find many takers. Instead, the conservative model for success became Lee Atwater, who made it to the top by working just outside the rim of power as a political consultant. Atwater enjoys winning, and being at the center of things, but has no sincere ideological agenda. And Washington is now full of people—lobbyists, academics, mere socialites—who aren't even part of the game but are happy to spend their lives as kibitzers. Rich people from around the world actually buy houses here, instead of (or in addition to) New York and the Riviera, simply to be close to the action.

This nest of political voyeurs now has a patron saint: Craig J. Spence. Spence is the most intriguing figure in an unfolding sex scandal involving a ring of male prostitutes who proffered their services to "key officials of the Reagan and Bush administrations, military officers, congressional aides, and U.S. and foreign businessmen with close social ties to Washington's political elite," according to a gleeful June 29 story in the *Washington Times*. Inexplicably, the johns left themselves open to exposure by paying not in cash but with credit cards. Thus it was revealed (says the *Times*) that Craig Spence, a right-wing Washington consultant, journalist, and socialite, was spending as much as $20,000 a month to provide sex for himself and his friends at a house equipped with electronic bugs and a secret two-way mirror in Washington's expensive Kalorama neighborhood. The *Times* cited the testimony of "prostitutes and others" that Spence used the surveillance equipment for blackmail. And in a patriotic fillip, the *Times* reported that during the previous year's July 4 weekend Spence led a merry band of friends and call boys on a 1 a.m. tour of the White House, aided by a Secret Service agent to whom Spence gave an $8,000 Rolex watch. (Not surprisingly, Spence has made himself unavailable to the press. According to the *Times*, the Secret Service, which is investigating the call-boy ring, has not been able to find him.)

Subsequent *Times* stories failed to reveal that any well-known government officials used the prostitution ring. The biggest fish so far are an associate director of presidential personnel from the Reagan administration and Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole's political personnel liaison to the White House, who resigned immediately after his participation was exposed. One minor but interesting revelation is that such a full-time government job exists.

Meanwhile other news organizations, including the *Washington Post*, have been slow to write about the scandal. A Spence profile appeared in the *Post*'s Style section only after the ombudsman, Richard Harwood, accused his paper of being "smug and scoopless" about a story broken by its not-quite-respectable rival. (The *Washington Times* is a competent, professional, right-wing newspaper unfortunately controlled by Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.) Coverage of the scandal by other papers may have been discouraged by recent complaints from government officials and reporters alike about the "ethics mania" on Capitol Hill. There's also the distraction of another major scandal in Washington—financial mismanagement at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (including some poverty pimping by James Watt and other conservative white Republicans). Surely, though, room can be found on the crowded national agenda to consider what the story of Craig Spence says about the odd respectability afforded Washington's voyeur class.

News stories in the *Times* have hyped Spence's reputation in Washington a bit, calling him a "power broker" whose influence "appeared unlimited" to his clients. Actually, a *Times* feature writer, Charlotte Hays, was closer to the mark when she wrote that Spence "never quite made it" as a Washington operator. Before the scandal broke, Spence occupied the periphery of most people's consciousness; they would meet him, wonder how he made his living (after a drunk-driving arrest, he had once listed his occupation as "millionaire"), then forget him. I myself had trouble placing Spence's name until I'd read a couple of the call-boy stories. Then it came back to me: three years ago, Spence had phoned to compliment me on a piece I'd written for this magazine and to ask whether I'd be interested in helping him assemble a pilot for a political talk show modeled on "The McLaughlin Group" called "Spence & Friends." I agreed to meet him for lunch at the Four Seasons hotel in Georgetown.

Spence is known for dressing like an Edwardian dandy, but I only remember that he wore a dark suit with a wool vest, which seemed odd because it was July. He was also puffing away on an elaborately carved pipe. He said that he had been a TV correspondent for ABC News in Vietnam, that he'd lived in Japan for years afterward, and that he now acted as a "Sherpa guide helping American businessmen climb Mount Fuji." (He meant this metaphorically, Mount Fuji symbolizing Japan.) Spence also represented the Japanese government in America, though I don't think he mentioned that. He dropped several names, including those of retired Lt. Gen. Daniel Graham, a well-known SDI advocate whom he planned to have on the talk show, and former TNR publisher James Glassman, who I later learned had written a short profile of Spence for *Washingtonian* magazine. That article aptly noted, "Spence does not so much drop names as heave them bodily."

As we talked, it became clear that "Spence & Friends" was far from a done deal. Eventually Spence changed the subject and asked me whether I'd like to go to El Salvador. I asked him if he was connected to some foundation. "I'll pay for it myself," he said. "I do it all the time. I'd be interested to see what a mind like yours could do with the situation down there." I politely declined, and wondered whether this was a sexual advance, some

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pointless bit of Washington networking, or both.

Spence had a faintly desperate air that signaled he wasn't quite right, but various respectable and even powerful people apparently felt comfortable doing business with him—especially during the early 1980s, which, according to documents Spence filed with the Justice Department as a foreign agent, were his flush years as a consultant for the Japanese. On behalf of the Policy Study Group (PSG), a Tokyo-based research firm partly funded by Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Investment, Spence would host seminars on various political issues. "I think I'm a frustrated educator," Spence explained to journalist David Osborne. Speakers at the seminars—most of them paid—included Senator John Glenn, Senator Frank Murkowski, Eric Sevareid, consultant Vic Kamber, Richard Holbrooke, Daniel Graham, Elliot Richardson, and William Bundy. The subjects on which they spoke—among them the gold standard, the AWACS sale, and the politics of nuclear power—are a quaint reminder of Washington's obsessions during the early Reagan era. Attendees included various Japanese and American government officials, businessmen, and members of the press. Spence also arranged trips to Japan for Graham, former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia Robert Neumann, and Sevareid (who lectured on "The Mood in America").

PHOTO BY PETER KOLK

Spence's oddest business activity was an arrangement with several reporters to write personality profiles of various Reagan administration officials for Japanese businessmen who wanted to be good hosts. A 1983 *New York Times Magazine* article by Osborne about the Japan lobby in Washington quotes one of the authors, United Press International's Ira Allen, as saying that Spence wanted to know if "so and so likes to drink or likes to stay up at night . . . or has a bad temper." The best-known contributor to this series was Sarah McClendon, the self-employed Texas iconoclast, who says Spence used to send his limousine to take her to the seminars, which she attended to learn more about Japan. McClendon also appeared on a talk show Spence hosted on Washington's WRC radio. "He was a very nice, suave, sophisticated man," she recalls. According to McClendon, Spence asked her to write a profile—of whom she can't remember—for what she understood to be a Japanese magazine. After Spence made public her $375 fee in the foreign agent registry, McClendon dashed off a letter to her colleagues in the Senate press gallery. "I thought he wrote a newsletter or report," she explained, "but I was not sure of his readership." She added that she'd subsequently decided not to write any more profiles for Spence because "I could not forget Pearl Harbor." For his part, Spence told Osborne that the journalists "knew perfectly well what they were doing."

As we now know, Spence's true métier was not reporting or educating or Sherpa-guiding. It was entertaining. Spence's social success is just the latest proof of Perle Mesta's famous maxim about attracting Washington big shots: "Just hang a lamb chop in the window and they'll come running." Omitting the illicit, his hospitality took two forms: lunches and dinner parties.

Most of Spence's lunches were not at hotel restaurants but at his house in Kalorama, which Spence purchased with cash from Motoo Shiina, president of PSG and now an important legislator in Japan. (According to the *Times*, Spence and Shiina had a legal wrangle over who owned the house in 1984; after Spence's lawyers obtained a court order compelling Shiina to reveal personal financial records, Shiina settled on terms mysteriously favorable to Spence.) Lunchtime visitors to Spence's house describe being led in by a butler, then made to wait in a drawing room for Spence to greet them. More than one guest observed that the furniture seemed rented. Spence would take his guest into the dining room and seat him at the far end of a long dining room table. Vic Kamber felt self-conscious about his table manners: "He's looking at me to see if I'm socially acceptable to show to one of his clients," he recalls thinking. Journalist Tom Bethell, another lunchtime guest, swears that even then he had the feeling that the long table was meant to make him speak up for an electronic bug. Liz Trotta, a former correspondent for CBS and NBC News and a close friend of Spence's, approached the issue with greater tolerance. Finding what she thought was a bug under the coffee table, she burst out laughing. "What the hell

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could he be getting?" she figured. Some have suggested that the bugs weren't real, but part of Spence's increasingly delusional attempts to pass himself off as a top-level CIA agent.

Dinner was a more extravagant affair, with lots of expensive liquor flowing both before and after, though not much in the way of food. The guest list was largely, but not exclusively, conservatives, and included Ted Koppel, Phyllis Schlafly, Arnaud de Borchgrave (who edits the *Washington Times*), and Joseph DiGenova, former U.S. attorney for Washington. Spence seemed to specialize in parties for ambassadors. In 1981, for example, he lured Neumann, the ambassador to Saudi Arabia, to a surprise party on the pretext of a meeting with visiting Japanese officials. Soon after the 1988 election, Spence held another party in honor of James Lilley, then ambassador to Korea and now ambassador to China.

By that time Spence had sold the Kalorama house, pocketing more than $500,000, and had bought a fancy flat on Massachusetts Avenue. "Upon entering the door, Craig informed me that this was a million-dollar apartment," says a Washington writer who attended the Lilley dinner. After dinner—a buffet served by "military types," one of whom made a pass at her date—Spence announced to the group that a call was to be placed to Lilley's wife in Korea. The crowd watched Lilley mumble awkwardly into the phone for a bit. Then, as DiGenova presented Lilley with a plaque, a security guard took the receiver and delivered a play-by-play description. At the height of the festivities, an omnipresent Yorkie named Winston dropped a steaming turd on the floor of the marble powder room. Sources are not yet able to confirm whether this was captured on videotape.

TIMOTHY NOAH is a Washington writer.

Poland can't eat George Bush's nice words.

LACK OF SOLIDARITY

By Jeffrey Sachs

In his trip to Eastern Europe and the Paris summit, President Bush repeatedly emphasized the importance of the reforms in Poland and Hungary, for the future of these countries and for stability in Europe (and hence for our own security). He acknowledged that the reform efforts are threatened by a worsening economic crisis in both countries. But the help he has offered them is woefully inadequate. Bush must now support large-scale financial assistance from the West if the reforms are to succeed.

The only new money the president offered in his trip was $100 million for Poland and $25 million for Hungary—derisory sums for countries collapsing under $39 billion and $19 billion, respectively, of foreign debt. The aid amounts to about $2.50 for each Pole and Hungarian. That's enough for one Happy Meal at the McDonald's in downtown Budapest.

However, Bush did also promise to support coordinated aid from the Western governments, and at the summit he pushed for a future meeting of these governments to discuss aid for Poland and Hungary. The minuscule aid that Bush offered in July might be only the beginning of a more realistic program of assistance. We can only hope that aid for Eastern Europe won't follow what is becoming the standard Bush practice on all spending issues: rhetorical generosity combined with fiscal stinginess.

Earlier this year high State Department officials under Secretary James Baker privately suggested to Solidarity that it should propose a large aid program for Poland. It was actually these officials who first floated the number $10 billion, which Lech Walesa brought up in his meeting with Bush on July 11. According to the *Financial Times*, Vice President Quayle had suggested $15 billion.

Encouraged, Solidarity's economists prepared a proposal for new loans to Poland. Solidarity stressed that the lending should be in stages, with each stage contingent on economic reforms leading to a market economy. Solidarity's own proposal said: "Financial assistance should be extended in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of its being squandered as in the past." Solidarity also promised to take responsibility for the borrowing, and the political heat for the reform program that would go with it, through its majority in the new Senate.

Unaccountably, administration officials hit hard at the Solidarity aid request as soon as it was circulated last month. Baker warned that $10 billion in loans was out of the question. He ignored Solidarity's own words, saying he opposed "making available a lot of credits and concessionary lending that did not carry with them appropriate economic reforms"—exactly what Solidarity was not asking for. An even more gratuitous insult came during Bush's visit to Warsaw. Chief of Staff John Sununu declared that it was important not to do "too much" for Poland, on the grounds that "you can't create the problem of a young person in the candy store, where there is so much that they don't know which direction to take and don't have the self-discipline to take the right steps."

The Poles are hardly living in a candy store. After 40 years of failed socialist economics, Poland is suffering from a terrifying decline of living standards, which Solidarity and reformers in the Communist Party are struggling to reverse. Inflation is running at nearly 200 percent per year and is likely to double later this year. The shops are empty, people are fleeing in panic from a worthless currency into dollars and into anything they can hoard. The very real risk is an explosion

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of violence that would ruin the chance of a peaceful transition to democracy and a market economy.

For Poland to escape from economic crisis will require deep economic surgery. Government subsidies will have to be cut in order to balance the budget. Food prices will rise, along with the prices of other basic commodities, such as gasoline, fertilizers, and rents. But a government led by the discredited Communists cannot carry out this kind of budgetary squeeze. The result would surely be widespread riots like those that occurred in 1956, 1970, 1976, 1980, and 1987. It's not impossible to imagine chaos in Poland leading to some form of Soviet intervention, which could risk the entire Gorbachev experiment throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Solidarity alone can salvage the Polish economy. But only with the prospects of adequate lending from the West can it assume the grave risks of economic leadership—for example, sponsoring the necessary increase in food prices—without fear of being used and then discarded by the Communist hard-liners. With Solidarity's leadership, the Polish people will accept the short-run pain of higher prices and social dislocation if it will lead to the creation of a real market economy. Price increases in the past have been all pain, no gain. With Solidarity, the same price adjustments would be a credible step toward long-term price stability; a convertible currency; a market economy linked to Western Europe; and large-scale privatization. Even a reformist Communist Party cannot credibly offer such policies unless forced by Solidarity, for these policies will threaten the privileges of hundreds of thousands of Party bureaucrats.

Solidarity is not asking for a blank check. Its proposal is serious, measured, and realistic. The big, round figure of $10 billion is not intended to be drawn as a gift from the U.S. Treasury. It is a request for *loans*, at market interest rates, over a period of three years, and from a variety of international sources. Direct lending from the United States would be very small.

Under Solidarity's plan, $2.7 billion would come from a three-year program with the International Monetary Fund, with all of the normal conditions. About $3 billion (or $1 billion per year) would come from the World Bank, for various project loans and so-called "structural adjustment loans," in which money is lent to support a restructuring of the economy. Finally, about $1.4 billion a year would come from all the industrial countries, with France, Germany, and Japan picking up most of it. Solidarity also has requested that Poland's bank debt be reduced sharply under the Brady Plan, and that its official debt be rescheduled generously for the next three years, along the lines of America's recent deal with Mexico.

We are giving this kind of help to Mexico and Venezuela, two countries undergoing reforms that are ambitious but easier to implement than Solidarity's designs for Poland. In Poland, the security stakes are higher and the barriers to reform much worse, for no country has ever successfully transformed a planned economy into a market economy. Poland will have to write the book on that process, under arduous social, political, and financial circumstances.

The stakes in Poland are very high. Solidarity is ready to lead, from its dominant position in the newly elected Senate, or even from ministerial positions. But it will not lead a suicide march, in which it does the dirty work for Communist hard-liners then finds itself without the money to sustain real reforms.

Baker tends to brush off debt-relief requests from poor countries as "unrealistic." But Solidarity is far more realistic than Baker when it stresses that the massive restructuring of the Polish economy will take financial help from the West. It is hard to think of a better investment in Western security than to provide the loans that Solidarity is now requesting, as well as comparable support for Hungary. The administration will have the chance to match Bush's rhetoric with actions when the industrial countries reconvene in the coming weeks to consider their financial policies for Eastern Europe.

JEFFREY SACHS is professor of economics at Harvard and an adviser to Solidarity.

Thoughts in a Budapest graveyard.

TOTEMS AND TABOOS

By Leon Wieseltier

One of the first victims of tyranny is the marked grave. A grave with a name and a date imparts information not only about the dead, but also about the living: that we fear death, but not the dead; that the dead have disappeared from our midst, but not from our past. When the dead find peace, so do the living. The unmarked grave, by contrast, is a confession that we are guilty toward our origins, so guilty that we must destroy them.

To rule over the living, the tyrant tries to rule over the dead. For the dead are not silent, or weak; they agitate for something, they assert a view, they express an opinion, which is that there is a natural order in human life, that what comes after will be measured by what came before, that memory will never be sundered from identity. Happy is the man, the prime minister, the people who need not hide from the graveyard, that is, from history.

I learned about the political significance of head-

continued on page 24

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In addition to our trade and fiscal deficits, America faces a "third deficit"—the deficiency of public investment in our people and ou economic infrastructure. This deficit will have a crippling effect on America's future competitiveness.

Just as business must continually reinves in order to prosper, so must a nation. Higher productivity—the key to higher living standards—is a function of public, as well as private, investment. If America is to succeed in an increasingly competitive world, we must expand efforts to equip our children with better education and ou workers with more advanced skills. We must assure that disadvantaged children arrive at school age healthy and alert. We must prevent drug abuse and dropping out among teen-agers. We must fix our bridges and expand our airport We must accelerate the diffusion of technology t small and medium sized business.

Yet these needs have been neglected throughout the past decade. In real dollar terms federal spending in the 1980s on science and civilian technology has been significantly below the levels in the 1960s and 1970s. Compared to the late 1970s, the federal government is now spending less per person on education and less per worker on training. We are devoting less of our national spending to federal investments in highways, mass transit, airports and other transportation infrastructure.

State and local governments have not been able to pick up the slack. In the 1980s, state and local spending on both education and transportation as a percent of GNP has been below the level of the 1970s.

We fully understand the problem that th current US fiscal deficit poses for efforts to expand public investment in these areas. Many o the undersigned have been in the forefront of those arguing that the fiscal deficit must be reduced. But, in economic terms, budget deficit reduction and an expansion in public civilian investment are compatible. Indeed, over the lon run we cannot eliminate the twin deficits and maintain our living standards unless we expand our public investments.

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Public Investment, Now.

Clearly, this will require adjustments in her parts of the Federal budget. Substantial vings are obviously possible in the military and riculture sectors. And there is no escaping the ed for more revenue.

Raising taxes is never popular. Neither is ducing spending on programs which benefit werful economic or ideological interests. But ere is strong evidence that the people know that ere is no free lunch. Polls have shown that ajorities support a change in priorities and that ople are willing to pay for public services that e vital to the nation's future.

Thus, while there is no easy answer, there an answer: it is to devote a portion of new venues raised, and/or savings made from reduc- g areas of excess spending, to critical public vestments. We can afford it. For example, $30 llion in net new public investment would come approximately one-half of one percent of our NP in fiscal year 1990. Such an investment, if operly administered, would be a bargain for day's working population. The present genera- n of workers will have to depend on a much naller working population to support their retire- ent. Without adequate training and an efficient onomic infrastructure, tomorrow's workers will t be able to maintain tomorrow's retirees in a mfortable and dignified standard of living.

The future will not wait. Each year of lay means another million dropouts and an crease in the number of American workers ose skills are inferior to those against whom y have to compete. It means more deteriora- n in our roads, bridges and airports. It means ling behind another step in the race for the chnologies that will support tomorrow's higher comes. It means compounding the already ssive debt we are leaving to the next genera- n of workers by denying them the tools they l need to pay off that debt.

We therefore urge you to resist the nptation to deal only with today's crises, as portant as it is to solve them. For the sake of r nation's future, we urge you to raise the nies needed to regain America's competitive ge—before it is too late.

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stones one morning in Section 301 of the New Public Cemetery in Budapest. Until a few days before I visited the place—well, I will let one Bela Liptak, a Hungarian now living in the United States, writing in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1985, describe the place as it appeared then, which is not as it appears now:

> Mourners have visited Section 301 for years, assuming that it contains the remains of Imre Nagy, the former prime minister of Hungary who was hanged in 1958 along with General Pal Maleter, his minister of defense, and adviser-editorialist Miklos Gimes. The regime has refused to tell the family where the dead lie, and has been trying to erase the memories of 1956 by bulldozing cemetery plots. . . .
>
> Section 301 resembles a bewooded field, has high grass and difficult footing. The moundless, shallow graves had receded so that I stumbled in and out of the one-to-three foot depressions. The concrete marker for Section 301 is opposite the northeast corner of the 8-to-10 foot concrete wall, which surrounds the cemetery complex. Counter from the marker, the grave of Ilona Roth, a young female medical student who was the first '56 revolutionary executed to serve as an intentionally harsh example, is in the 11th row. An overgrown bush marks the spot. From there to the corner I saw no more depressions, as they have been repeatedly plowed or bulldozed to make identification difficult. . . .
>
> Records for Budapest's 10th district show that between May 22 and June 16, the day Nagy's group was hanged, 16 executions took place. . . . Assuming that no "unrecorded" executions took place in those days and that the prime minister and his officers were treated the same as all others executed at the Gyujto [a prison not far from the cemetery], Nagy, Maleter, and Gimes are in row 16, graves 12, 13, and 14.
>
> I believe that international and domestic pressures eventually will lead to the return of the dust of Nagy and his Cabinet to their families. Until then the best we can do is pay our respects at Section 301, row 16, graves 12, 13, and 14.

I hope that Mr. Liptak returns to Section 301. For his belief was correct: pressure at home and abroad did return the dust of the decent to their families and to their people. The reburial of Imre Nagy and his colleagues on June 16 was the first public event not presided over by the Communist Party in the Communist history of Hungary.

A few days after that sad, happy day I visited the new graves. It was easy to see how foul Section 301 had been. You walk a long distance into the cemetery, farther and farther past the necrological vanity of the Budapest bourgeoisie, beyond the coarse, uninscribed crosses of the paupers and the criminals a little jungly with weeds, to a dim corner by the outer wall, a forsaken patch tilled by power, where secrecy seemed likely. The attraction of this place to the likes of Kadar (and Khrushchev, Suslov, Andropov, and the rest) is obvious. There are morbid swellings in the ground everywhere. It is chilling, even many years later, to stroll on soil mixed with flesh.

The democrats of 1956 still lie in Section 301. But what was supposed to be a place of shame for them has been transformed into a place of shame for the system that slew them. Now there are marked graves for the most prominent, and for those whose remains could be identified. (Forensic justice, indeed.) The graves of Imre Nagy, of Miklos Gimes, of Geza Losonczy, of Joseph Szilagyi, and a few others are set not far apart from each other along a newly paved walk. They are pyres of petals and stems. Pink and yellow roses drying voluptuously in the sun are piled four and five feet high, so that nothing shows but the names and the dates, before which the totalitarians trembled. A row of flowers and facts. The men and the women come and lay more cuttings down and speak gently to one another, and at length only to the children. Over to the side the wreaths from the ceremony still lie, many of them decorated with crepe on which the names of the bereaved and vindicated families have been inscribed in gold. At the foot of each of these vernal biers is a small sea of wax, from the little memorial lamps placed by the hushed visitors; the colors spill into each other beneath the gasping flames, and onto the walk.

In the charnel corner of Section 301 there were found the remains of 200 more Marxist humanists murdered by Marxist inhumanists (the more typical kind) in the wake of the Hungarian revolution. Not all these remains were identified (though Ilona Roth and a few others have cheated oblivion). These heroes now lie beneath the most extraordinary commemoration. They lie in a forest of totems. An avant garde artists' group called Inconnu, a part of the opposition that has been showing its work in the cold since 1956, has produced 200 funerary columns of oak, known as *kopjas*. These *kopjas* are from three to seven feet high, and no two are alike. Their conception is unforgettably pure. They rise somberly from the freshly turned earth, their pinnacles carved in abstract, geometrical designs, in angles and curves derived in part from the folk forms of the Hungarian countryside.

I had never encountered anything like these totems, except in Brancusi's work in wood; and the *kopjas* in Section 301 displayed a similar mingling of modernism and archaism, which suits a site consecrated to the memory of a contemporary fight for an ancient prize. And I had never seen a monument with less rhetoric. The variety of the columns honored the diversity of the victims. The delight of their shapes, their surprising aestheticism, was an additional slap in the face of the murderers and their "culture." People walked slowly between the *kopjas*, silenced by them, unassisted by them, referred simultaneously to history and to eternity. The wounds of the chisel were still fresh on the wood; no winters have yet hardened the memorial, and the memory, too, was as fresh as the parings that still clung to the carvings.

Reflection turned to horror before the *kopja* of Peter Mansfeld. I could see from afar that a special reverence attached to this column; there were the brittle roses and the sea of wax. A xeroxed sheet of paper affixed to the oak gave Mansfeld's picture, and his dates. The date of

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his birth was 1941. The date of his death was 1959. I was puzzled. The executions took place in 1958. I asked my friend Judith Konrad, a historian of Budapest's graveyards and an activist in the opposition, to explain. She drew a breath and said that it is contrary to Hungarian law to execute somebody less than 18 years old. When Peter Mansfeld was condemned to die, he was too young to die; and so he was held in prison until his 18th birthday, when he was hanged. The thought of Peter Mansfeld's 18th year didn't leave me for days. And I was reminded of the special talent that totalitarianism has shown for legalism.

I asked Judith to translate four lines of verse that were attached to a wreath. They were a curse on the executioners, on the eye that looked through the gunsight and the hand that held the blade. Judith was surprised by the bitterness. She explained that the reburial of Nagy and his colleagues was conceived by the opposition completely in a spirit of reconciliation. In fact, reconciliation is not a sentiment, it is a politics. The opposition has turned its back on anger, not least because it fears the results of the action taken in its name. "No revolutions," said Judith, almost religiously.

After the revolution of 1917 and the revolution of 1956, the democrats of Hungary appear to have concluded that revolution itself is a part of the problem. The dissidents I met all agreed on the avoidance of extremism. Their god is reform. The reasons are partly philosophical (they are sick of History) and partly practical (the situation is not all that desperate, not least economically). In this respect, they are the sons and the daughters of Nagy, whose political life was a journey from Stalinism to gradualism. But they have before them, too, the cautionary example of Nagy, who was pushed by circumstances toward a *jusq'au-boutisme* that brought the whole thing down.

Nagy was among the founding fathers of the Hungarian Communist Party who sought refuge in Moscow after the collapse of the revolution in 1919, and who returned to Budapest on the back of the Red Army in 1944. He was, in short, a creature of Soviet Stalinism; and one of the mysteries of 1956 is surely his conviction that his friends in the Kremlin would not be provoked by Hungarian democracy and Hungarian neutrality. One of the advantages of Stalinism, you would have thought, is that you know where the line is. ("Do you *really* not know the kind of people you're dealing with?" Janos Kadar asked Alexander Dubček, three days before Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia.)

That is an advantage that Gorbachev has removed. For example, in his speech in Strasbourg: "Social and political orders in one country or another changed in the past and may change in the future. But this change is the exclusive affair of the people of that country and is their choice. Any interference in domestic affairs and any attempts to restrict the sovereignty of states—friends, allies, and others—are inadmissible." Golden words. But in Budapest I learned that such words produce as much anxiety as joy. The opposition will not be fooled again: there *must* be a line. The problem is that Gorbachev has robbed them of any sense of where it is. And so these rebels rebel slowly, cautiously, working also within the Party, as they advance into territory never before charted in the orbit of communism.

It is important to understand the complicating effect of *glasnost* upon the democrats in the empire. *Glasnost* is, among other things, an invitation to radicalism; and radicalism is precisely what the enemies of *glasnost* are praying for. Thus it is that in Poland, too, Lech Walesa preaches that "the safe road is the evolutionary road" and invites the dour and dark-eyed general to stay in power. Gorbachev's renunciation of proletarian internationalism, moreover, cuts both ways. The sovereignty of the states of Eastern Europe may be used to preserve "socialism," not to destroy it. A country's Communist order is as much its own affair as a country's capitalist order. Thus Gorbachev hastened to insist in Strasbourg that "differences between states are not removable. . . . I know that many people in the West regard the existence of two social systems as the major difficulty. But the difficulty is rather in the common conviction, or even the political directive, that overcoming the split of Europe implies the 'overcoming of socialism.' " Self-determination is not the same thing as democracy; and it has provided many dictators with a source of legitimacy. It is certainly a lot shinier than the Brezhnev doctrine.

So it was that George Konrad remarked soberly in Budapest upon the possibility of what he called "national Stalinism." National Stalinism is exactly what is taking place in Romania, and there are less deranged forms of it in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. The danger in Budapest, then, is dizziness. The transformations in Hungary and Poland are probably not reversible; but Hungary and Poland are not the whole of the Soviet empire, and it may be that what results in Hungary and Poland will be only a "Hungarian model" and a "Polish model," that is, exceptions within the empire, a mixed economy and a mixed system of power that raises the quality of Hungarian and Polish life but falls far short, morally and strategically, of a new dawn. Remember, the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only at Gdansk.

Outside the New Public Cemetery in Budapest, samizdat posters and publications are sold. Judith and I head for a café, fleeing from significance down the grand fin-de-siècle boulevards. Through the windows of the cab I see that Budapest is peeling, that the plaster that hid the bricks that faked the stone of the city's thousands of neoclassical columns is coming off, revealing what is real. In the great square we sip drinks, and Judith asks me about Washington, about the intentions of the American government in Eastern Europe. I feel that it is my duty to lift her spirits. But it has been a day of truth, and so I tell her that in the United States we have an administration that is not in the mood for history. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Tax Dodgings

Chishu Ryu is one of the most memorable actors in postwar Japanese film, best known for his roles in Yasujiro Ozu's films, especially for his performance in one of the great artworks of this half of the century, *Tokyo Story*. Ryu makes a brief appearance in **A Taxing Woman's Return** (New Yorker)—as a retired monk—and is quite out of key with the rest of the picture. This dissonance is deliberate. The writer-director, Juzo Itami, wanted to underscore change. Itami's sequel to *A Taxing Woman*, which was seen here last year, sustains his earlier film's hurtling pace, and Ryu's presence emphasizes Itami's differences from the past.

He is obviously not a "Japanese" director. Not only is he leagues away from Ozu and others who were seeking the stillness at the center of activity; he is far from Kurosawa and kin who applied modern vigors to traditional Japanese subjects. (*The Seven Samurai*, for instance.) Itami uses his briskness, his snap-click editing, his sharp cuts between long shot and close-up, on subjects that seem as international as his style.

But there's a contradictory point. For all this international modernity, the people themselves, their quirks, affinities, reservations, seem at the last intrinsically Japanese—as far as an outsider can tell. Nobuko Miyamoto (Itami's wife), continuing her role as a sleuth of tax evaders, pursues a rich, brutal swindler all through the film. Toward the end they are in a room, arguing, when she spots someone outside trying to take a shot at him. She pulls him to the floor and saves his life. He breaks down with fear and relief, and cries; and she nestles him in her arms, this villain she has been chasing for weeks, and comforts him. Here, and elsewhere, Itami seems to be saying, "Yes, but they're still Japanese." At any rate, it's behavior unlike what I'd have expected in a film from any other country.

Itami's father, Mansaku Itami, was a noted director of samurai films with a light touch. The son stayed away from his father's profession for most of his first 50 years; he was a painter, an essayist, a talk-show host, and an actor. His first film was *The Funeral* (1986), a touch too dispersed but a brightly talented satire on mock mourning; his second was *Tampopo*, a smart comedy with Miyamoto as a young widow trying to start a noodle shop; then *A Taxing Woman*, and now its sequel. Everything he does is lively, shows his sharp eye for the dramatic and the ridiculous, relishes the sexy, and yearns—not quite despairingly—for virtue in human behavior.

Yet he has troubles as a writer, crystallized in the fact that *Taxing Woman* No. 2 is a perfect sequel to No. 1. Itami pours and pours, in more or less the same vein as in the first picture. We feel that, without much strain, he could someday write *Taxing Woman* No. 12. He knows a lot about his subject, schemes for tax evasion and schemes to catch the evaders; and he overstuffs his script in a way that makes us think that the shape of the film is unimportant to him, that he just keeps on stuffing until he feels he has enough for one picture. His screenplays are like yard goods—high quality, yet snippable at shorter or longer lengths. The narrative strands are woven to a conclusion, but there are so many of them in one film that we feel they are being finished off only so that more may be started. No. 2, particularly, is too long; its silhouette is distended.

Itami is an assured, confident director. Sometimes, in the midst of the headlong pace, he takes time to be subtle. Aided as usual by the cinematography of Yonezo Maeda, he gives us compositions with overtones. In the opening shot, for instance, we see a field with an overhead highway running away from us at an angle, seeming to meet a ridge that runs in from the other corner. An airliner crosses the sky just above the angle while a bicyclist walks toward us. (When he gets close, those who saw No. 1 will recognize the actor who played the chief heavy in that film.) The overall impression is of the compacting of eras. The bicyclist stops and looks off-screen with horror. We see that he is looking at a corpse floating in a stream—and we're off on a new story. New stories.

But Itami oversupplies as a director,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dead Poets Society. *Robin Williams plays (fairly) straight as a prep-school teacher who inspires his class with writings of the past and makes trouble for everybody. More likable than thrilling. (Reviewed 6/26/89)* **Do the Right Thing.** *A neighborly summer's day on a block in Bed-Stuy finishes in violence. Spike Lee's script pushes problems at us, in the film and in life; his directing is masterly. (7/3/89)* **Lawrence of Arabia.** *Among other things, it revitalizes the distinction between movie and film. It's a wonderful movie* and *a wonderful film. (2/20/89)* **Little Vera.** *A Soviet film that reveals a good deal more than Vera's (publicized) bosom. A touching and candid comedy-drama about current Soviet disaffections. (5/1/89)* **—SK**

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just as he does with his writing. He insists on shooting through flames, on close-ups of flashing lights. He does some things three or four times when twice would be plenty. (A sonic barrier stopping intruders in the swindler's office, for example.) He has extraordinary talent, but he needs someone he can trust to say "no" once in a while.

As the indefatigable sleuth, Miyamoto has snub-nosed puppy-dog appeal. She's a one-person summation of the Itami contradiction: she combines briskness and efficiency with gentleness and effervescence. Just when we think that, among her colleagues, who are all male, she is becoming somewhat genderless, she reacts with charming anger to a coarse joke. Once when she is hurrying down a corridor to get some papers that she thinks will clinch her case, she breaks out in a clumsy ballet leap. I'd bet that this was Miyamoto's impromptu, not part of the script, the sort of thing that Godard often left in his films.

By far the strongest performance in the film—this combination doesn't always happen—is in the strongest role: Rentaro Mikuni as the chief swindler, a con man who has organized a religious cult so that he can benefit by the tax exemptions granted to religion. Mikuni ranges easily from tough gang boss to "sincere" smoothie to killer to cunning hysteric. In one scene where he is being questioned by investigators at their headquarters, he suddenly bangs his head repeatedly against the wall to bloody himself, frightening his questioners about his sanity and fabricating proof that he has been tortured. The hysterics are soon swallowed in his pussycat smile of triumph. He doesn't look remotely like Jack Nicholson, but if Nicholson were Japanese, it's the sort of performance he might give.

Toru Masuoka plays a fresh university graduate (the character's name is Mishima!) assigned to be Miyamoto's assistant. He's all right, but the most noteworthy point about him is his Brooks Brothers look, reminding us that there is indeed a Brooks Brothers branch in Tokyo.

The basis of the main swindle in the film is land-grabbing in Tokyo. At the end, after Mikuni has been stopped, the tax sleuths are seen outside a chain fence while the real overlords of land-grabbing, for whom Mikuni had worked, gather for a land-breaking ceremony, congratulating one another and chuckling. The tax people watch helplessly outside the fence.

I hope this doesn't forecast another sequel. It would be only as good as this one. Itami and Miyamoto ought to move on.

The latest James Bond picture is **Licence to Kill** (UA), which insists on the British spelling of the first word. Following suit, I report that, though big cheques may come to the producers, the film is a flat tyre. Word of honour.

What is Central Europe?

The Telltale Scar

By Czeslaw Milosz

BUDAPEST

On the banks of the Danube, it is quite natural to ask whether the idea of Central Europe has been just a whim of a few intellectuals, or acquires now a new significance thanks to the aspirations for democracy that have been reawakened in many countries. The simple fact is that our perspective, whether we are Poles or Hungarians or Yugoslavs, is different from the perspective of Western Europeans, Russians, or Americans. But the common denominator cannot be established theoretically, only empirically.

According to one view that is often advanced, the notion of Central Europe is artificial, since the countries embraced by this name aspire to become simply a part of Western Europe. There is some truth in this thesis; and yet its proponents bypass certain important facts and certain durable traumas. Fifty years ago, on August 23, 1939, an event of calamitous importance took place, which became the preamble of World War II. This was the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, with its confidential protocols and secret clauses that defined the so-called

Czeslaw Milosz's most recent book is *The Collected Poems, 1931-1987* (Ecco Press). This essay was presented at the Wheatland Conference on Literature in Budapest in June.

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spheres of influence that divided our part of Europe between the Soviet Union and Germany. We are separated from this event by half a century, but also by millions of deaths, by mass deportations, by planned exterminations of civilians, by concentration camps and slave labor camps.

There is probably a basic division between the two halves of Europe in the difference between memory and lack of memory. For Western Europeans, the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact is no more than the vague recollection of a misty past. For us—I say us, for I myself experienced the consequences of the agreement between the superpowers—that division of Europe has been a palpable reality, as it has been for all those in our countries who were born after the war. Therefore I would risk a very simple definition. I would define Central Europe as all the countries that in August 1939 were the real or hypothetical object of a trade between the Soviet Union and Germany. This Central Europe encompasses not only the area usually associated with the idea of "centrality," but also the Baltic states (the area where I was born).

The reduction to the role of an object of history creates deep traumas. It explains our wariness when we think of our two big neighbors. Independence from the Big Brother to the east probably should not be equated with an unreserved acceptance of the West, which is represented in the first place by the economic power of Germany. I speak here not as a politician or an economist; yet a writer cannot abstain from delineating a territory for his or her prognosis for literature.

We are entering the last decade of the 20th century, and, taking stock, we cannot but call it a century of revolution. While the identification of revolution in politics with revolution in art or literature is misleading, the existence of a link that brings together revolutionaries in art and revolutionaries in politics cannot be doubted. The revolt of the 19th-century bohemians against the philistines and the bourgeois left a heritage clearly visible, for instance, in the history of surrealism. Now, in an era that is sometimes called postmodern, we ask ourselves whether we are thrown into a situation in which we cannot say "no" to the existing order of things, whether our dislike of the bourgeois and the philistine has lost all foundation. The disintegration of the communist doctrine—of socialist realism, and so on—leaves the field for art and literature submitted to the rule of supply and demand, East or West. The image of the decadent West versus the vigorous and morally healthy East has crumbled. And our countries of Central Europe are no longer protected by artificial barriers from the words, the sounds, the colors pouring into this area from the West.

Since I live in America, since I am, to some extent, an American writer, I should rejoice in this victory of freedom—even if it is a relative freedom only, for barriers still exist. And yet it is precisely my American experience that reinforces my conviction that man does not live by bread alone. I would not be delighted to see all of us, wherever we live, in the East or the West, enter a period in which the assertion that man needs more than bread will be punished by ridicule. Or, if you prefer, that man needs more than sex and violence.

All the suffering of millions of human beings terrorized by totalitarian governments would be sentenced to total oblivion if something precious is not saved from the disaster, namely, the discovery made by those people of a clear line dividing good from evil, truth from lie. Central European countries made this discovery even as the literati of America and Western Europe were treating the opposition of good and evil as a somewhat obsolete notion.

The critical attitude of many Central European writers toward their Western colleagues finds an explanation also in the pressure of public opinion to which writers are always sensitive. Many of them have been accused of failing, in the years of Stalinism, to preserve their professional integrity, and of conniving with the terror of the state; thus, they are particularly attentive now to the notion of the moral responsibility of the writer. To the east, in Russia, this idea of the writer's moral leadership goes even further. I have seen a kind of blacklist composed by an independent intellectual in Moscow that includes all those in the West, beginning with Bernard Shaw, who made public pronouncements in praise of a system that kept millions of Soviet citizens in gulags.

Decades of pain and humiliation: *that* is what distinguishes Central European countries from their Western counterparts. Literature cannot avoid being marked by this issue, often in a quite unexpected way.

Writers in Poland—and in this respect Poland may stand for several other countries—have discovered the dangers of direct commitment, of participation in political struggle.

It was not only cowardice and opportunism that inclined many writers to embrace the doctrine of the Communist Party in the postwar period. Yet even those writers who remained morally motivated did not escape lies and a travesty of reality, which seems to be inseparable from the system. In the 1970s Polish literature finally moved to the side of dissent. It soon became an ally of Solidarity, both during Solidarity's time of triumph and time of persecution. At that time the moral issues were clear, and no serious writer sided with the Party's apparatus.

Unfortunately, important pieces of writing do not necessarily result from pure hearts and good intentions. The poetry and the prose of the last decade have been obsessive, convulsive, monothematic: a victim of their own exclusive concern with liberation from a bankrupt political system. Liberation is, certainly, a noble task. But poetry and prose have their own rules, they are bound by exigencies of form and durability.

It is legitimate to ask, therefore, what happens if a Polish writer (or a Hungarian writer, or a Lithuanian writer, and so on) decides to take a vacation from actuality, to deal with the "eternal" subjects of love and death. Is he in the same position as an author of poems or fiction in London, in Paris, in New York? In my opinion, he is not. Here we encounter a truly difficult problem, which has little to do with the political, philosophical, or religious options of a given writer. I refer, instead, to the whole mentality of the writer, which is acquired not quite consciously.

The specific contribution of this area of Europe to world literature may consist precisely in finding expression for its peculiar mentality, with its weaknesses and its strengths. In translating into English and preparing for print the erotic poems by Anna Swir, a Polish poet, I noticed how different her verse is from that written by women, her contemporaries, in America. Instead of a confessional tone, there appears a kind of far-reaching detachment, an amused observation of herself and of man, a surprisingly cruel objectivity. Also, there is practically no attempt at psychologizing. This is just one example. There are many others.

An American friend of mine, the poet Leonard Nathan, asked me once, "Why are you and other Polish poets so interested in dealing with philosophical problems *through* poetry?" My answer to that question might invoke the collective experience of the last decades, the specific sense of history inculcated against our will by our participation in a historical drama. Or it might simply stress the hold of society on the individual, which enforces a certain objectivity (even in love poems). But finally such answers would not be satisfactory. Perhaps the literary differences I have described are owed to a sense of proportion: certain ways of

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thinking and writing seem too frivolous in the face of the genocidal habits of mankind.

Whatever the answer, I have the feeling of touching something real without being able to name it. I do not mean to hide the fact that I am imbued with a dose of fanaticism, which is not (at least I hope not) of a doctrinaire kind. That fanaticism is directed against those tendencies in the contemporary literature of the West that offend my need for hierarchy—for a hierarchy of values, of forms, and of styles. I have no ready-made prescriptions. I am trying, as I said, to grope empirically toward a formulation of the Central European difference, by noticing common approaches in literary works that come from this area.

The term "historical imagination" escapes definition. Still, without a doubt, some people have it and others do not. I believe a person endowed with that type of imagination is able to grasp events precisely by associating them with a proper place and time. One of the consequences of modern technology and of mass education, particularly notable in the countries of the West, is the growing vagueness of notions related to history. The difference between the 13th century and the 18th century is blurred; languages spoken in various lands are confused; dates are mixed up.

Historical imagination is probably trained by the memory of a collective suffering. If this is true, writers of Central Europe are called to make use of it in their works. Historical imagination reconstructs the past of human societies. It makes us aware of the extreme durability, the permanence, of the past. Thus, in speaking of Central European cities, for example, it is necessary to keep in mind that they bear traces of belonging in the 19th century to two different empires: the Czarist Empire in the north and the Hapsburg Empire in the south. Similarly, we may expect the totalitarian experience to leave a permanent scar—even if, as we hope, it will not be shared by the young generations.

The Master of Mish-Mash

BY ALAN RYAN

Arnold J. Toynbee: A Life by William H. McNeill

(Oxford University Press, 360 pp., $24.95)

Who now reads Arnold Toynbee? His work lies dinosaur-like on library shelves, a vast intellectual ruin. It repels the casual reader, and invites only astonishment that one man wrote it and millions once read it. Even in the abridgement that first brought him before the American public, Toynbee's *Study of History* is a bulky 600 pages; the unabridged ten-volume *Study* is well over 6,000 pages. Yet that bulk was no deterrent to those who fell so hungrily upon Toynbee in the 1930s and 1940s.

It was not surprising that English readers took to the first volumes of the *Study* during the 1930s. Toynbee's story of decline and fall followed Spengler's *Decline of the West*; it caught the mood of an educated public who saw that the British Empire had had its day. But Toynbee's success in Britain was modest and highbrow. It is his postwar American fame that leaves one gasping.

In 1947 Oxford University Press launched the abridged *Study*. It gambled on a large sale and shipped 10,000 copies to New York. They vanished instantly. More were shipped and they vanished also. In that year, 129,471 copies were sold, and nearly a quarter million altogether. Toynbee had formidable assistance. Henry Luce had met him during the war, and hailed him as a prophet of America's postwar future. *Time* was set to transmit Toynbee's gospel. Whittaker Chambers was told "to make this monumental material and complicated thought briefly and clearly communicable," and the issue of March 17, 1947, contained the result—the agreeable message that, although *A Study of History* was a record of the rise and fall of every previous civilization, "Our civilization is not inexorably doomed." The British Empire was dead, long live the American Empire. That is a brisk summary of Toynbee's views, but it is not untrue to their spirit.

Time offered reprints of Chambers's essay. Fourteen thousand readers wrote in, and Luce announced a few weeks later:

> The response has been overwhelming. It has come from professors of history, philosophy, and anthropology, from deans of American colleges and universities, heads of public and private schools. . . . The governors of seven states have been heard from, so have businessmen, Congressmen, and just plain citizens, radio broadcasters, journalists. . . . In particular, the clergy have been strongly represented.

So it was that, until he alienated his American hosts by his anti-Zionism, and his increasingly mercenary attitude toward the foundations and universities that supported him in the 1950s and 1960s, Toynbee found fame and prosperity on the lecture circuit.

The high tide of Toynbee's worldly success and intellectual acclaim is the high point of William McNeill's *Life*. This engrossing if dispiriting biography is built around two distinct themes. The first is personal: that Toynbee was vastly successful, but nobody in his right mind would have purchased success at the price he paid. He was a driven man. All his life he worked inhumanly hard to fend off financial insecurity, real and imagined. He fought for public recognition to compensate for a miserable marriage. He was terrified of inheriting the incurable depression that kept his father in a hospital for the insane for the final 30 years of his life. No fame, no wealth was enough to appease the inner desolation.

Aside from Veronica Boulter, his devoted assistant and second wife, Toynbee had scarcely a friend. Relations with his children were bad. His oldest son killed himself in 1939; his second son, the writer Phillip Toynbee, teetered on the edge of alcoholism, bankruptcy, and mental breakdown. Only late in life did he get on with his third son, Lawrence. It was Lawrence Toynbee who invited McNeill to write the book; and though McNeill writes with restraint, it's plain that the inner life of his subject appalls him.

The life's second theme is intellectual. Toynbee lived for, through, and in his *Study of History*, and it shares this biography on equal terms. The author of *The Rise of the West* and *A World History*, McNeill is himself a historian of Toynbeeian scope, uniquely qualified to give us the total man. He shares Toynbee's passion for Greek and Near Eastern affairs, and has moved between the academic and the diplomatic worlds in much the same way Toynbee did. And McNeill displays notable sympathy in probing his uningratiating character. Toynbee's career has an awful fascination, and McNeill catches it well.

Still, he leaves one faintly dissatisfied.

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The truth is that McNeill is rather too decent for his subject. He knows that *A Study of History* is a dreadful book, that the messianic pretensions that fueled it were three parts mad. He is aware that Toynbee's wife Rosalind was both wicked and self-deceived. He has talked to the Toynbees' grandchildren, cousins, and daughters-in-law, and unless they have recently become astonishingly reticent, they will have left him in no doubt of the emotional unsatisfactoriness of both Toynbees.

McNeill won't indulge in family gossip, but he doesn't quite rise to the intellectual challenge, either. He mentions several times that Toynbee's reputation never recovered from Hugh Trevor-Roper's notorious *Encounter* essay of 1957. But he fails to explain the charges that "Arnold Toynbee's Millennium" prosecuted with such passion. Surely it is essential to tell us that Trevor-Roper denounced Toynbee as an enemy of all those liberal values for which the Allies had fought in the Second World War. Toynbee, said Trevor-Roper, hated "Western civilization because it is basically liberal and rational." He hoped to see it destroyed and replaced with a society "built on the religion of Mish-Mash of which he is the prophet and Messiah." "Mish-Mash" was Trevor Roper's brutally apt name for the mixture of Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, and other notions that Toynbee hankered after as the religion of the new age. McNeill won't even acknowledge such lethal shots as Trevor-Roper's observation that the *Study* was "written in a style compared with which that of Hitler or Rosenberg is of Gibbonian lucidity." If there's to be any intellectual point in a biography like this, however, McNeill must rescue Toynbee from Trevor-Roper—or give him up to his tormentors.

What McNeill is wonderfully good at, on the other hand, is re-creating the social, financial, and emotional cramps that made his hero who and what he was. Toynbee was a classic victim of a lower-middle-class family with high ambitions and no cash. His grandfather was a man of some distinction, a fashionable physician who had cured Queen Victoria of deafness. An accident with chloroform killed him in 1866, and left his young family hard up.

His uncle Arnold was a brilliant scholar, who also possessed an extraordinary moral authority; his passion for social reform led him to the idea of establishing settlement houses in the East End of London, where undergraduates could bring Christianity to the working classes and feel the reality of an underprivileged existence. He, too, died early—at the age of 30, in 1883. But his influence permeated odd corners of English socialist politics for another 70 years, and Toynbee Hall still perpetuates his memory. He certainly haunted his nephew's youth. Though he died six years before Arnold J. Toynbee was born, he set an excruciatingly high standard of academic success and moral goodness. When young Arnold Toynbee first burst into print, an outraged relative insisted on his appearing as Arnold J. Toynbee, lest anyone confuse him with his long dead uncle.

Toynbee's father was a good-natured, underpowered young man who unwisely married the daughter of a bankrupt industrialist, and never earned by his own efforts more than £400 a year. Arnold was born in 1889, almost a decade before his two sisters, and he was to all intents and purposes an only child, and the object of all his mother's affection and ambition. He became the archetypical scholarship boy, leading an isolated, bookish existence at Winchester, then following in his uncle's footsteps to Balliol College, Oxford.

McNeill's picture of Edwardian Balliol is chilling. It was still the Balliol of Benjamin Jowett, where worldly success and aristocratic connection were prized as much as intelligence and hard work. The non-sporting Arnold never grew to enjoy the sound of drunken oarsmen breaking up the front quad, nor did he feel at ease with their style when they were sober. The real strain of those years, however, was imposed by his father's breakdown. It dragged on through 1908 and 1909, and in the following year Harry Toynbee was committed to St. Ann's asylum for the insane, never to emerge into the world again.

Relations with his mother, moreover, collapsed. She felt he was shutting himself up in his work to avoid her miseries. He felt the same. It cannot have helped to be told as much by his future mother-in-law, the formidably destructive Lady Mary Murray. "Your Mother has been made an old woman, her life smashed, all her joy behind her . . . and you've been failing her," she wrote, ending with the alarming imperative, "You cannot and must not fail, never again." Toynbee made sure he would not, concentrating on what he could do well, no matter the cost to everything else in life.

When he graduated in 1911, Balliol invited him to stay on to teach ancient history. His first "ambition with a great big A" was gratified. He now fell in love with the college, writing of his new colleagues' "most marvelous and beautiful devotion" to it. Reality let him down.

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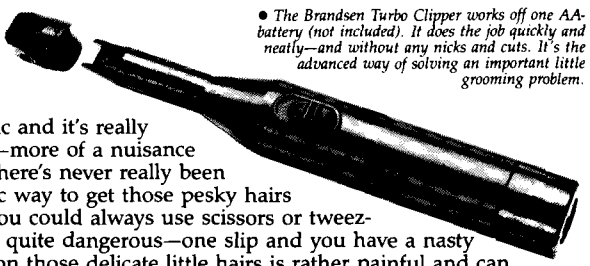

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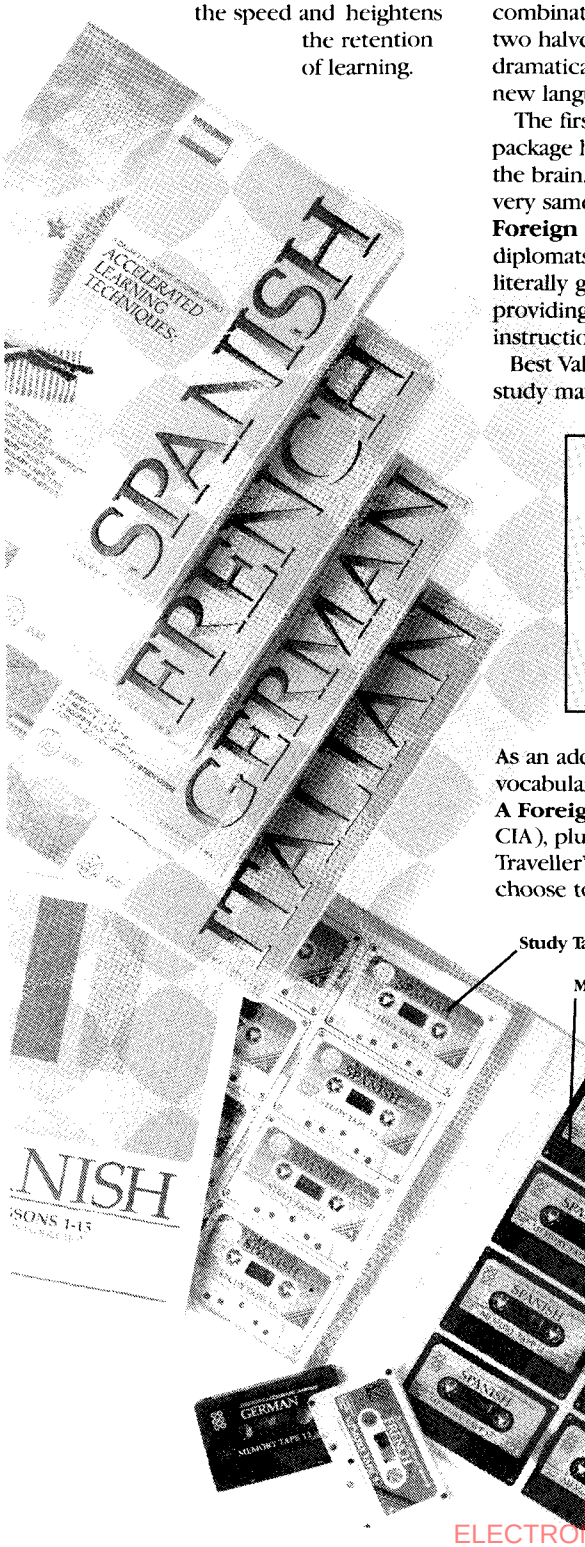

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Balliol, then and since, has always devoured its favorite children. In a way no American academic can fully credit, its Fellows are expected to sacrifice their time, their families, their research, and their worldly ambitions to the undergraduates. Toynbee wanted to travel, to research, to write—to produce the world historical epic that made his name. Teaching the uncommitted young was not as enchanting as it looked. But as McNeill says, it was less the local frustrations of Oxford donhood that did the damage than marriage on the one hand and the War on the other.

Toynbee had met Gilbert Murray, the classical scholar, during his undergraduate days. Murray liked the clever young man, whose intellectual horizons were already so much wider than most undergraduates. But it was Murray's daughter Rosalind who caught Arnold's eye. She hardly noticed the studious young man whose head she had turned. In 1913, when Arnold proposed, she refused him; then she changed her mind. Quite what Arnold Toynbee was marrying remains mysterious. His aunt Charlotte believed that he really wanted to marry Castle Howard—and anyone who saw the television adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited* will sympathize. The great house belonged to Rosalind's grandmother, the Countess of Carlisle, and Rosalind was her grandmother's favorite. It is possible that he wanted to marry into a grand intellectual milieu; the Murrays were at the center of pre-1914 liberal intellectual life, and through Rosalind's grandmother he even acquired Bertrand Russell as an unlikely cousin.

It was a terrible mistake, and Rosalind knew it. Even her father, trying hard to believe it was a good match, told a friend, "We never thought of him in connection with R. They scarcely knew each other and seemed to have no common interest." Rosalind's novel *Unstable Ways*, written during her engagement, shows what an understatement that was. Its heroine accepts an academic suitor who is a ringer for Toynbee, sees her error, and drowns herself. In fact, the marriage duly took place; early in 1914 Rosalind was pregnant, and the first of their three sons was born in September 1914, a month after the outbreak of war.

The second great crisis of Toynbee's adult life was now upon him. Ought he to enlist? He was not a pacifist. He did not think (as Rosalind did already, and as he tended to later) that the war was merely a contest between two equally deplorable nationalisms. His settled view was that Germany ought to be badly beaten first, then conciliated. But Rosalind would not hear of his volunteering; and when conscription came in 1916, an old bout of dysentery was enough to get a doctor's certificate that he was unfit to fight.

Still, ambition and guilt pressed him to do something. He joined the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, and thereby paved the way for what became his career. Though the work was interesting, and he kept at it 14 and 15 hours a day, it plunged him into financial anxieties that didn't really lift until after the next war. The meager pay of the Foreign Office was temporary and inadequate; it was supplemented only by the uncertain bounty of the Countess of Carlisle. They could live in comfort when they were invited to Castle Howard, but the increasingly prickly and arbitrary Countess took a good deal of buttering up, and Arnold's pride and temper suffered.

A pattern was established: ferocious hard work and small doses of family life (or more exactly, small doses of Rosalind and an occasional glimpse of the children). Stability came slowly. His postwar appointment to the new Koraes Professorship of Byzantine Studies at King's College, London was a disaster, and he resigned in 1924. Then he finally landed on his feet. The British (later the Royal) Institute of International Affairs had just been founded, and Toynbee was appointed for a year to write the first of its annual *Survey of International Affairs*. When the post was combined with a chair at the London School of Economics, Toynbee proved unwilling to do even a part of the academic duties, and the hybrid appointment collapsed. Finally, money was found to install him as director of studies at Chatham House, and he settled down to a career of mind-boggling productivity. Year in, year out, the annual *Survey* of international politics appeared; sometimes more of it was his work, sometimes more of it was Veronica Boulter's, but always it was substantial, comprehensive, not exactly official, but a good deal more than a private perspective.

Meanwhile *A Study of History* was brewing. Rosalind called it the Nonsense Book, and Arnold deferentially did, too. Yet the urge to write it was fueled by periodic flashes of what seemed to him to be a mystic illumination. At times of stress, he seemed suddenly to be in communion with God—not the Christian God, but some sort of abiding and universal Presence—and at those moments, it became clear to him that he must carry on and explain what human history was all about. In 1934 the first four volumes of *A Study of History* appeared. Though he only mentions these events in letters and in autobiographical essays, the religious inspiration of the *Study* is quite explicit. Volume 10 contains his declaration of faith that history shows us human souls, raised to a new dimension by the gift of the Spirit, moving through a fateful exercise of their spiritual freedom, either toward their Creator or away from Him.

By this time, Toynbee had assimilated Spengler, and had bolted onto it his own extraordinary reading. The result was a sort of illustrated catalog of civilizations from the Iron Age to the modern world. Its theme was that although civilizations were not, as Spengler claimed, living organisms with a life cycle of their own, they did follow certain universal patterns of growth and decay. The role of the leaders and the led, of technical skill and religious insight, of political power and cultural achievement could all be fitted into a pattern. Though Toynbee was careful to say that there was nothing predestined about these processes, what appealed to his readers was the old Platonic picture of a circular rise and fall. As for the modern Western world, he had no doubt that it had begun to decline as soon as liberalism and free thought began to sap an unreflecting attachment to Christianity. Not that Christianity itself was either true or essential. What *was* true and essential was some transcendent value to which individuals could subscribe, and for which they would sacrifice themselves.

Toynbee's political views did not justify Trevor-Roper's unkindness about his irrational illiberalism; nor were they fatalistic or conservative. He leaned mildly toward appeasement, but hoped that the liberal democracies and the League of Nations could stop Hitler and Mussolini. For all his immense work at Chatham House, he was not prescient about the coming catastrophe in the Pacific, and for all his global reach, he held the old liberal imperialist view that the British Empire had a duty to assist in the creation of a world of unaggressive, democratic self-determining nations. He shared with Russell and innumerable others the belief that some sort of world authority was needed, either imperial or through the League. After the war he settled for the *pax Americana* as the best thing available. The connection of these unexceptionable opinions with either the religiosity or the vast historical sweep of the *Study* remains obscure.

The first four volumes of the Nonsense Book were well received: the next two came out in 1939 and were lost in more important matters. The war saw Toynbee's career flourish and his private life reach rock bottom. Tony killed himself in 1939. Philip was endlessly in trouble. Rosalind joined the Catholic

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Church, and decided that she could not stand living with Arnold any more. McNeill's account of all this makes painful reading. Arnold did his best to appease Rosalind, did his best to sympathize with her Catholicism, all to no avail.

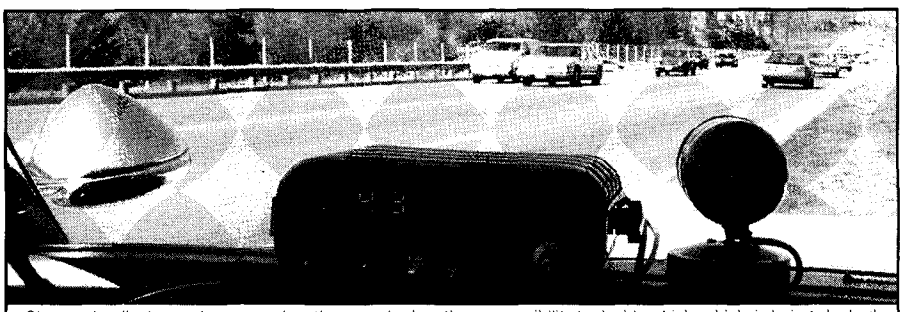
And then came the miracle. Hesitantly, Veronica Boulter decided that she would marry the man she had been supporting for 20 years already, and the New World redressed the balance of the Old by treating him as the secular prophet he aspired to be. Between his royalties, visiting professorships, and the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, he was a rich man—though he never felt quite secure. He crisscrossed America, lecturing endlessly, getting into undignified messes by promising the same publication to too many presses, and finally blotting his copybook irreparably by his consistent hostility to Israel.

Toynbee's famous animus against Israel had several sources. He shared the common British view that the Palestinians had paid too high a price for the new Jewish state. He disliked all forms of nationalism, so had no sympathy with Israel's ambitions for statehood. And he always ascribed the intolerant and exclusive aspects of Christianity to its Judaic origins. Though he said he was not anti-Semitic, he refused all invitations to visit Israel, and showed at best a lack of interest in the propaganda use that the Arab world made of his work. None of this went down well in the United States.

Japan stepped in when American interest flagged. The creed of "Mish-Mash" against which Trevor-Roper had inveighed turned out to be much to the taste of the Japanese Soka Gakkai movement, a religious-cum-political sect that advocated the spiritual regeneration of Japan on the basis of Buddhism. The Americans had finally seen that Toynbee's longing for something transcendent but not dogmatic actually meant that he was a non-Christian, and they did not care for the diluted Buddhism that seemed to be his alternative. Soka Gakkai, on the other hand, was in the market for just such a vision, and was not disappointed.

By now Toynbee was in his late 70s and repeated himself shamelessly. The last four volumes of *A Study of History* had appeared in 1954; they were respectfully reviewed, but the tide had turned against him. Although Toynbee continued to be widely respected for his work on international politics, it was increasingly in spite of his Nonsense Book, not because of it. In defending it, McNeill argues that Toynbee deserves some credit for trying to do what he did at all. It was, he says, an achievement to remind his readers that history was not a purely Western affair, that there had been other civilizations and other cultures, with their own ambitions and their own cycles of life and death. This is fair enough, but it does nothing to save the most characteristic features of Toynbee's own work, such as his belief that there were exactly 21 civilizations worth analyzing, or his belief that exactly the same mechanisms operated in every rise and fall, or indeed the religious message of the whole work.

McNeill underestimates the extent to which liberals after 1945 did not care for *any* theory of history. For intellectuals, if not yet for the general reader, Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and *Poverty of Historicism* had tarred all large-scale theories of history with the totalitarian brush. Marxism had encouraged socialists to throw their opponents onto the rubbish heap of history; and fascist messianism had done the same. By 1954 American sociologists like Daniel Bell and Edward Shils were reminding their readers of the blessings of the end of ideology, by which they meant the end of a belief in large historical schemes.



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Though these thoughtful and articulate doubts about the intellectual credibility of total history took time to affect the wider public, the intellectual community was in a chastened—perhaps even an intellectually chaste—mood.

To the extent that McNeill, John Roberts, and Paul Kennedy have revived the genre, what has been revived is less deterministic, less prophetic, uncommitted to cramping all societies and their history into a Procrustean mold. Toynbee's enterprise was the last gasp of an essentially 19th-century, Romantic approach to history. Cycles of growth and decay were reminiscent of Vico, but the emphasis on spiritual forces was borrowed, wittingly or unwittingly, from the apparatus that Hegel had bequeathed. "Mish-Mash" was the late offspring of *Geist*.

That, plainly, wasn't all Toynbee's readers found in him. It was the combination of a semi-religious framework with an amazing quantity of concrete factual information that worked the charm. Anti-colonialists could read the writing on the wall when they considered the role of "external proletariats" in the destruction of civilizations; and anyone fearful of nationalism could take heart at his denunciations of "the petrified devotees of the idol of national sovereignty." The gloomy could sympathize with the declining British, and the cheerful could rejoice with the ascendant Americans. The trouble is that everyone could find in it what they wanted. So Trevor-Roper was right. It was Mish-Mash.

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Man of Music

BY STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein by Eric A. Gordon

(St. Martin's Press, 605 pp., $29.95)

Today Marc Blitzstein is chiefly remembered, it seems fair to say, for two of his operas and his adaptation of an opera by two other men. *The Cradle Will Rock* and *Regina*, writes Eric A. Gordon in his brimming biography, "are destined to retain their attractiveness for future audiences because they are so solid and consistent in conception." As for Blitzstein's version of the Brecht-Weill *Threepenny Opera*, a further patent of its survival, says Gordon, is that Blitzstein's lyrics figure in the forthcoming film. Without comment on the whole of Blitzstein's catalog, which I wouldn't be competent to analyze even if I knew it, I'd say that this trio of operas serves him well. He wrote in many different forms, including music for films, but these three works vividly present his gifts and his view of the world.

It was a life in music—a brutally shortened life, but one that was focused early and constantly centered. Blitzstein, who was born in Philadelphia in 1905 of Russian-Jewish stock, grew up in a warm family atmosphere and was encouraged to pursue the career for which he soon showed ability. His musical education was thorough. He studied composition in Philadelphia with Rosario Scalero, in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, who became a lifelong friend, and in Berlin with Arnold Schoenberg, whom he disliked.

He also had pianistic talent. When he was 16, he won a piano contest and was chosen to play a Saint-Saëns concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra. In New York he became the first American pupil of Alexander Siloti, who had been a student of Liszt and Tchaikovsky and a teacher of Rachmaninoff. (Blitzstein must really have been good. Once after he and Schoenberg had flatly disagreed about composition, Schoenberg said, "Very well. Go ahead, you write your [Franco-Russian pretty music], but please stay in my class—you play the piano so well.")

A piano career did not follow. He composed. The first public performance of a Blitzstein work was in 1924, his incidental music for a Hedgerow Theater production of Andreyev's *King Hunger*. (Not a Soviet play, as Gordon says: it was written in 1906.) This was a "form" he used much in his life—incidental music for plays. He then went on to pour out music in many forms—piano, vocal, instrumental in various combinations, operas (small-scale).

Beginning in the early 1930s, he wanted his music to represent the radical views that were growing in him. By 1934, in response to an invitation from Kurt Jooss to compose for the Jooss ballet, he wrote:

> I have come to feel more and more that the only kind of stage-work I want to do now is one of social and political import. I should be unhappy with any other sort of theme; and I should be unsatisfied even with a ballet which depicted conditions without exposing the social revolution as goal.

Communism slipped into Blitzstein's life, apparently, as it slips into this book, and as it slipped into much of the art of the decade. It seems to have been seeded by the Depression, as it was for so many, and was cultivated in Blitzstein by an extraordinary young woman named Eva Goldbeck whom he met at the MacDowell Colony in 1928. She was a writer, four years older, German-born and Jewish, who was slight yet hyperactive in many ways, including various literary activities, politics, and amour. She and Blitzstein were mutually attracted, though she was also busy with other men and knew he was homosexual. By 1932 "both agreed that Communism was the goal toward which they would strive." In 1933 they married because, mostly in an asexual way, they loved each other very much. Eva died in 1936 of anorexia, but this woman, who had been omnivorous for everything except her own physical survival, remained a constant in Blitzstein's life.

After Eva, her mother, Lina Abarbanell, once a noted soprano and for many years active in the Broadway theater as a production associate, was one of the two women whose love was essential to him. The other was his older sister, Jo. She was married and a mother when, in 1929, he wrote to her frankly about his sexual being and she replied equally frankly. He then responded:

> I am not shocked at your incestuous instincts; as you must know, I have known about them as long as you have—perhaps longer. . . . I have no such inclinations (I couldn't have); but I have always known that you are and probably always (ultimately) will be the most important person to me. . . . Whether or not my homosexuality can be traced to an original & repressed feeling for you, can only be guessed at.

Blitzstein's homosexual life, about which he was candid with many of his friends, consisted mostly of brief encounters, with frequent one-night pickups. He liked his sex life utilitarian rather than committed. His one prolonged relationship was with a bisexual who, Blitz-

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stein knew, was seeing women while they were together and who eventually married. This relationship, implicitly triangular, if not quadrilateral, repeated aspects of Blitzstein's marriage to Eva.

All through his career he was interested in the blending of high art and pop. He wrote numerous pop songs, none of which had much success. In the mid-1930s he wrote a song called "Nickel Under My Foot," which used pop strophes to relate the plight of a poor prostitute. In 1935 Bertolt Brecht was in New York for the production of his play *The Mother*. Blitzstein, who had known Brecht's work since his Berlin days, met the playwright and played "Nickel" for him. Brecht urged him to write a piece that treated "all kinds of prostitution—the press, the church, the courts, the arts, the whole system." Eventually Blitzstein complied. The result was *The Cradle Will Rock*, which includes "Nickel."

Cradle was presented by the Federal Theater, with John Houseman as producer and Orson Welles as director. The story of the opening night, June 16, 1937, has been told several times, by Blitzstein himself on a recording of selections from his works; by Howard da Silva, a member of the original cast, on the album sleeve of one of the *Cradle* recordings; by Houseman in his autobiography *Run-through*; by Joanne Bentley in her biography of Hallie Flanagan, the head of the Federal Theater; and now by Gordon. In 1983 I saw an off-Broadway revival of *Cradle*, before every performance of which Houseman read his account of the opening night.

Suffice it here to say that it was one of the most theatrical events in American theater history. For various complicated reasons, the WPA, which ran the Federal Theater, had ruled against the show's opening at all, and the entire company rebelled against the ruling. They marched through the streets—from the theater on 39th Street where they were supposed to play and from which they had been barred—to a hurriedly rented theater near 59th Street, followed by the audience. A piano was put on the bare stage for Blitzstein, who sat down to do all the numbers. But no sooner had he started than Olive Stanton, a cast member who was supposed to sing the opening number, rose from her seat in the auditorium and began to sing. Other cast members followed suit, singing and speaking from their seats scattered through the theater until, in a rising swell of excitement, the whole work had been performed. (I wasn't there; and the worst of it is, I *could* have been.)

Cradle deals with labor strife in Steeltown, USA. To hear it again these days is to recognize that everything usually said about it is true. Its structure resembles that of Odets's *Waiting for Lefty*, which had appeared two years earlier; its music sometimes suggests Kurt Weill's style, which Blitzstein knew; and it is dated. It deals in poster-plain ideas and characterizations. But something else is true. It is so full of conviction, it pulses with such feeling and fury, that it is still vigorous. Even if we now look at it through the wrong end of the telescope, we can still see that it is alive.

What it also demonstrates is that Blitzstein was a considerable librettist. His ability to write strong prose is shown in the many quotations that Gordon cites from Blitzstein's critical essays—he wrote for various music journals all through his life. But he had the gift of writing for his own music, for singers. Except when he set poems by such as Whitman and Cummings, Blitzstein wrote his own texts. Aaron Copland said in *Our New Music* (1941): "In [Blitzstein's] work for the musical theater he has the inestimable advantage of being able to write his own texts. (You have to know how very rare good librettos are to appreciate what that means.)"

His way with words is even more evident in the libretto for *Regina* (1949), his opera based on Hellman's *The Little Foxes*. (Obviously I'm omitting much, including the *Airborne* Symphony, which resulted from his wartime service in the Air Force.) Here of course he had Hellman's dialogue as a base, but he adapted with musical lines and shapes in his ear, rhymed when needed, often with internal rhymes, and unrhymed when the phrase or meter thrives musically on its own.

The music itself, from the fierce opening chord, is arresting. Sometimes it is a touch sentimental: the embrace of black music at the beginning and end seems more an obligatory statement of Blitzstein's social concerns than an absolutely requisite comment on the action. But moments that seem "operatic" in the play, like Birdie's reverie about her childhood home, lose their quotation marks in *Regina*. A further ironic benefit that *Regina* bestows on its source: Hellman's creaky, leaky plotting, particularly toward the end, seems much more at ease in what is literally a melodrama. The English musicologist Wilfrid Mellers wrote about *Regina* in *Music in a New Found Land* (1964):

> This freshness and vulnerability, the sense of something waiting to be born, is Blitzstein's characteristic note. . . . *Regina* is a fully-fledged opera, which has grown out of the conventions of popular music. . . . Blitzstein's great achievement is that he has imbued techniques borrowed from the commercial world with the power to hit back—to stand for, rather than against, the human spirit.

In 1949 Blitzstein left the Communist Party. It would be easy to infer—Gordon helps us to infer it—that his withdrawal was connected to the party-line strappado of *Regina*. The *Daily Worker* music critic had blasted the opera for being insufficiently pro-black! No letter of resignation exists; but Gordon surmises that Blitzstein, without losing social interests and without ever denouncing his prior associates, was weary of "dated agitprop standards." After leaving the Party, he signed a letter to Virgil Thomson, "Red but not dictated."

One index of his continuing interest in social criticism was his continuing passion for *The Threepenny Opera*, which he translated. (He also translated *Mother Courage* and *Mahagonny*, but neither of these translations was produced.) He had first heard the Brecht-Weill work in

Rereading Jane Austen's Novels

This time round, they didn't seem so comic.
Mama is foolish, dim or dead, Papa's
a sort of genial, pampered lunatic.
No one thinks of anything but class.

Talk about rural idiocy! *Imagine*
a life of teas with Mrs. and Miss Bates,
of fancywork and Mr. Elton's sermons!
No wonder lively girls get into states—

no school! no friends! A man might dash to town
just to have his hair cut in the fashion
while she can't walk five miles on her own.
Past twenty, she conceives a modest crush on

some local stuffed shirt in a riding cloak
who's twice her age and maybe half as bright.
At least he's got some land and gets a joke—
but will her jokes survive the wedding night?

The happy end ends all. Beneath the blotter
the author slides her page, and shakes her head,
and goes to supper—Sunday's joint warmed over,
followed by whist, and family prayers, and bed.

KATHA POLLITT

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Wiesbaden in 1929 and had, as some of his own work attests, never forgotten it. In addition to translating, he made some changes in the music. He reassigned some songs for Lotte Lenya, Weill's widow, and for Beatrice Arthur, of current TV fame. He transposed. He restored two numbers that had been cut from the original Berlin production and inserted a song from the Weill-Brecht *Happy End*. He ended with a reprise of "Mack the Knife" instead of Weill's finale. He accommodated Weill's scoring—for 21 instruments originally played by seven special performers—to the available eight-man band.

The production opened off-Broadway on March 10, 1954. It was a smash hit, but after only 12 weeks it closed because of difficulties with the theater's landlord. Due to, for once, authentic popular demand and to critical demand, *The Threepenny Opera* reopened on September 20, 1955, and ran over six years. I saw it three times, with different casts, and wish I had seen it more. It was like a small, pointy diamond that cut through most nonsense in the theater. The original-cast album was a best seller. That, plus the show's success, made Blitzstein say wryly that he would be remembered as the adapter of other men's work. The remark comes too close for comfort or justice.

In addition to much other subsequent composing, Blitzstein made a musical called *Juno* out of O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, which closed in its Boston tryout in 1959. He promised to revise it drastically, but he never did. His last major venture was an opera on a subject that had been on his mind since 1931—Sacco and Vanzetti. Rudolf Bing of the Metropolitan commissioned the work in 1960, drawing public protests for sponsoring a radical, as did the Ford Foundation, which gave Blitzstein a grant to work on it. The composition went slowly: when friends asked him how the opera was going, he burst into rage—a fairly sure sign of desperation. At his death it was incomplete.

In November 1963—he was 58—he went to Martinique to rest. His health had not been good. He put the Met commission aside temporarily and took other work with him, an opera he was writing on Bernard Malamud's "The Magic Barrel." (The manuscripts of the unfinished Sacco and Vanzetti score he locked in the trunk of his Peugeot, which he left at home. After his death the manuscripts were found by the manager of a used-car lot to whom the Peugeot had been sold.) On the evening of January 21, 1964, Blitzstein picked up three men in a waterfront bar in Fort-de-France. Later in the evening they beat him severely in an alley, robbed him, and stripped him to his shirt and socks. The next evening he died of multiple contusions.

Gordon's biography is a loving memorial, a ten-year job done in fascinating detail and with abundant sympathy and balanced structure. The title itself, a phrase from *The Merchant of Venice*, is a salute to its subject: Blitzstein chose it for a book ("about music, about myself . . . anything that occurs to me") that he contracted to do but never wrote and for a lecture he gave at Brandeis in 1962. Gordon's writing is generally adequate without being impressive. Occasionally he strains: "The muscles of his hirsute arms reached powerfully into each digit." And he mixes quotations from reviews indiscriminately. Comments by such as Virgil Thomson and Paul Henry Lang are mixed with those by journalistic gabblers. He even quotes Walter Winchell.

Gordon's empathy with his subject makes him see other people through Blitzstein's eyes. We get a strong sense of the composer's adoration of Orson Welles. After *The Cradle Will Rock*, the actor-director was like a recurrent fever in Blitzstein's life. He responded readily whenever Welles called on him, as witness his scores for the Welles productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Danton's Death*—even his appearance as an actor in the film segments that Welles made for his production of Gillette's *Too Much Johnson* in 1938. After a 1946 performance of the *Airborne* symphony in which Welles spoke the narration, Blitzstein jumped to the podium to embrace him. In 1955 when Welles came back to New York after a long stay in Europe with plans to found a classical theater, Blitzstein wrote the music for the theater's first, and only, production, the ill-fated *King Lear*. We're made to feel that Blitzstein would have been overjoyed to be resident composer for a Welles theater.

With those people who troubled Blitzstein, Gordon makes small effort to be fair. Lillian Hellman suffers worst. Besides the *Little Foxes* connection, Blitzstein wrote incidental music for two of her plays, *Another Part of the Forest* and *Toys in the Attic*, so she was a continuing presence in his life, and a contentious one. Gordon continues the contention. He says that her five-paragraph statement in the CBS album of *Regina* is "a model of evasion passing for confession." I am no admirer of Hellman as playwright or woman, but I can't see what is evasive in that statement, posing as confession or not. She calls *Regina* "the most original of American operas, the most daring." True, after Blitzstein's murder she announced that she was going to Martinique to investigate his death, then spent three weeks on Sam Spiegel's yacht discussing a screenplay; but she did go ashore at Fort-de-France, spoke to the officials involved, and was apparently satisfied by the facts given her. True, too, that at Blitzstein's memorial service, she "cited her long, sometimes stormy relationship with Blitzstein" and referred to *Regina* as a "failure"; but the bluntness of the former may be seen as a token of regard in the circumstances, and the latter was simply fact as far as the Broadway production was concerned. (Further, in 1940 Hellman had joined the group that was formed to produce Blitzstein's opera *No for an Answer*.)

Gordon is also rigorous with Leonard Bernstein. Blitzstein, 13 years older, became friends with the younger man when Bernstein, still a Harvard senior, played the piano—from memory—for a production of *Cradle* and co-directed the show. Through the years, notes Gordon, there were borrowings by Bernstein from Blitzstein's music: from a piece called *Freedom Morning* for *On the Town*, from *No for an Answer* for *Wonderful Town*, from *Regina* for *West Side Story*. Gordon also says that toward the end "a part of Bernstein reveled in the sagging arc of Blitzstein's career." The Bernstein letter he quotes is smarmily solicitous, but "revel" seems somewhat strong. Gordon believes that "Bernstein did not even want Marc to enjoy a posthumous success," because Bernstein refused to finish the Sacco and Vanzetti opera so that the Met could produce it. But many reasons besides spite might have prevailed on Bernstein. (And for those of us who don't admire Bernstein's serious music, his finishing touches on the opera might not have been an unquestionable blessing.)

"I have no wish to hide the kind of person I was," Blitzstein said to an interviewer just before he left for Martinique, "for I am that person—plus years." Yet the reader of this biography can't help feeling that this determinedly honest man hid a basic truth about himself from himself, obfuscated it with dubious pronouncements. "I have three strikes against me," he once said, "three things the world detests. Number one, I'm a Jew. Number two, I'm a Communist. Number three, I'm a homo composer." But the curious fact is that, though he often made this remark, it was false.

Nothing in Gordon's biography supports Blitzstein's complaint of suffering on those scores. He may have suffered slights as a Jew, but nothing worth mentioning in the history of this century. His

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troubles as a Communist, with the FBI and with others, were negligible compared with what some fellow-believers underwent; his one appearance before HUAC was in a closed session, so he escaped media publicity. He satisfied his political conscience, according to his lights, without substantive penalty. As for his homosexuality, though he was once almost killed by a pickup in wartime London and though his death was horrible, Gordon offers no evidence that Blitzstein suffered from homophobia during the course of his life. In music he had more success than many other serious American composers.

Again in this hair-shirt vein, Blitzstein said in 1951: "For the past 20 years . . . I have been skating on the thin edge of pauperism." This from a man who, though he was never wealthy, spent a great deal of time sojourning in beautiful places all over Europe and the Caribbean, as well as Israel. His breast-beating seems somewhat penitential, as if he felt obliged to legitimate himself, a triple outsider, with some decorum of unhappiness. But a contradictory truth underlies Gordon's book—Blitzstein was happy.

Certainly he had miseries, disappointments, unfulfillments. But if he had been able to see himself objectively, if he had wanted to see himself that way, free of what he thought he ought to be feeling, he might have recognized two facts: he was living exactly the way he wanted to live, and he was devoting his life to the use and improvement of his talents. Forget the miseries of the day, the week, the decade; is there a saner definition of happiness?

Life on the Edge

BY VERLYN KLINKENBORG

The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh

(Viking, 246 pp., $17.95)

Halfway through Amitav Ghosh's new novel, *The Shadow Lines*, the narrator says, "I no longer existed, but as a chronicle." That is a striking statement, a testament of personal extinction before one's story, the tacit confession of every omniscient narrator. In this novel, it implies the ability to repose on language as if it were a hammock, to trust the way its weave keeps one's haunches off the ground. It implies certitude, competence, judgment, meaning—all the trappings of what the narrator calls his "tidy, late-bourgeois world," whose genteel borders are rigorously defended against India's seething masses. To reduce (or enlarge) oneself to a chronicle demands the balance needed for the kind of storytelling that aspires to the composure of omniscience. The smaller your world and the tighter your borders, the easier omniscience comes.

In *The Shadow Lines* two families, one Indian, one English, engage each other in friendship, romance, and tragedy over a period that stretches from 1939 to the present in England and India. On the surface, this makes *The Shadow Lines* sound like a dying Raj epic in which Events are rolled out on wooden wheels and Character is displayed in front of a painted backdrop. Nothing could be further from the truth. The plot wanders at will in a thoroughly modern fashion, weaving from one place and year to another, following currents of association, disowning chronology. Though *The Shadow Lines* is only Ghosh's second novel, this whirling, dipping narrative manner—so familiar from his celebrated first novel, *The Circle of Reason*, and so difficult to summarize—is virtually a signature of his work. All the while, the plot leads the reader to conclusions that undermine the idea of Event itself, not to mention the comfort of Language and the conceit of Omniscience.

Among the characters in *The Shadow Lines*, the most important is Tridib, the narrator's idol and elder kinsman, who believes that "we could not see without inventing what we saw." A scholar with a mysteriously disengaged grace, Tridib filled the narrator's childhood with stories because "everyone lives in a story . . . because stories are all there are to live in." Tridib's niece is Ila, a spoiled Marxist student for whom the narrator feels painfully unrequited love. He nourishes a more confused affection—lust, softness, and awe together—for Tridib's former lover, May Price, a London musician who girds herself for Earth's crowded

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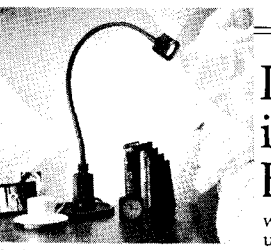

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future by fasting on Saturdays and sleeping on a pallet. The narrator's grandmother is a woman of fierce middle-class belligerence. Her determination to revisit her childhood home in Dhaka, from which she and her family fled just before that city became part of East Pakistan, triggers the incidents that spiral upward to tragedy: Tridib's death in Dhaka during one of the subcontinent's epidemic riots.

And then there is the narrator. He never names himself (others call him "silly boy"), but he is very much an actor in his story. With delicate irony, the narrator portrays himself as a young Indian boy crouching on the edge of every conversation, breathlessly gathering stray words and broken stories into what he calls "my own secret map of the world." He hoards the tales Tridib and Ila tell him of England and refines them until, as a doctoral candidate doing research in London, he visits May Price's family in "boring suburban old West Hampstead," where both Ila and Tridib have lived. In an embarrassing tour de force that demonstrates what he calls "the inequality of . . . needs," he astonishes the Prices with his encyclopedic knowledge of their house, their neighborhood, their lives—in short, with his carefully fabricated omniscience, a form of homage to May Price and her family, as well as to Ila and Tridib.

Such enthusiasm—such obsession—emerges from the narrator's faith in the structure of his "small, puritanical world" and from his inexperience of anything else. Though the narrator was well-tutored by Tridib in "inventing" countries—imagining what he calls the "ordinariness of their difference," how some, for instance, have flat roofs and some have sloped roofs—he also inherits the hardheaded nationalism of his grandmother, who remarks that the English have "drawn their borders with blood. . . . That's what it takes to make a country." "I believed in the reality of space," the narrator writes. "I believed that distance separates, that it is a corporeal substance; I believed in the reality of nations and borders; I believed that across the border there existed another reality." Though they sound more sophisticated, these beliefs closely resemble his grandmother's assumption that at the border of India and East Pakistan there must be "trenches perhaps, or soldiers, or guns pointing at each other."

The Shadow Lines is a political novel because it questions the most basic structures of political life: peoples, borders, states, space, distance. But *The Shadow Lines* goes deeper than that: its central theme is how one extrapolates from the self to knowledge of others, in time or in space. If one repudiates the reality of space, the reality of nations and borders, the fact that distance separates, how does one proceed? And what if knowledge of the past were only, as Tridib believed, "the seductive clarity of ignorance: an illusion of knowledge created by a deceptive weight of remembered detail"? How could one attach meaning to the past?

All these matters come to bear on Tridib's death, a tiny effect contained within a much larger cause. Tridib dies in January 1964 during rioting that sweeps India and East Pakistan with typical results: Hindus murdering Muslims, Muslims murdering Hindus. (Tridib's death is complicated, if not caused, by the presence of May Price, who intervenes in good conscience in matters beyond her understanding. Price is Ghosh's Mrs. Moore.) What makes the riots momentous for the narrator, aside from the loss of his admired kinsman, is that as a boy his school bus had been caught in them too, but in Calcutta, not Dhaka—across the border and, presumably, far away. He did not connect the two events—that special frightening day and Tridib's death—until he was grown.

The discovery leaves him shaken; it violates (and ultimately destroys) his conventional faith that borders demarcate changes in reality across which emotion cannot flow. "The only relationship my vocabulary permitted between those separate realities was war or friendship. There was no room in it for this other thing [the wave of rioting]. And things which did not fit my vocabulary were merely pushed over the edge into the chasm of that silence." Under the pressure of this discovery, the narrator ceases to be the omniscient showoff of his younger days—the tidy, late-bourgeois master of maps and chronicles—and finds instead that his sense of the world and, more important, of language has been utterly discomfited.

To Tridib's belief that "there are moments in time that are not *knowable*," Ila is the counterpoise. Events the narrator has savored for years and that Tridib would probably deem unknowable, she understands in terms of her own life. She breezily assumes that a household of young people on the verge of destruction in World War II resembles the household she inhabits: they must have been happy because she is happy. "I began to marvel," the narrator writes, "at the easy arrogance with which she believed that her experience could encompass other moments simply because it had come later." That is the true mark of someone living entirely in the present. "Ila," says the narrator, "would not have believed that there really were people like Tridib, who could experience the world as concretely in their imaginations as she did through her senses." She is an absolute moralist for whom context is irrelevant because she can imagine none but her own.

Both Ila (the narrator's exact contemporary) and Tridib educate the narrator, one through blind and rather chary affection, the other through subtle meditations couched in anecdote. They pull in opposite directions. And yet, ironically, Ila provides the most satisfactory commentary on Tridib's death, the exact cause of which was quickly suppressed by his father, an important Indian diplomat stationed in Dhaka. Ila remarks offhandedly that famines and riots and disasters are "local things, after all—not like revolutions or anti-fascist wars, nothing that sets a political example to the world, nothing that's really remembered." As political borders give reality to a nation, so wars give reality to conflict that has no reality unless it takes a politically recognized form. When he first hears Ila say this, the narrator begins to shout in protest, but it is very close to the conclusions

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he finally draws from Tridib's death. "The theater of war, where generals meet," he writes, "is the stage on which states disport themselves: they have no use for memories of riots."

Tridib's death and Ila's commentary teach the narrator that below the level of his orderly analogies—his secret maps, his genteel syntax—there lies another level of human relationships that cannot be boxed or bordered. The narrator acknowledges the lesson. "The madness of a riot," he writes, "is a pathological inversion, but also therefore a reminder, of that indivisible sanity that binds people to each other independently of their governments. And that prior, independent relationship is the natural enemy of government, for it is in the logic of states that to exist at all they must claim the monopoly of all relationships between peoples." The riot that kills Tridib exposes the fear afflicting all who live in the subcontinent, "a fear that comes of the knowledge that normalcy is utterly contingent." If normalcy is utterly contingent, then so is morality (*pace* Ila), and so is language.

After such terrifying lessons, one can say of the narrator what he says about his grandmother:

> Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for a journey which was not a coming or a going at all; a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits the proper use of verbs of movement.

The narrator was once sure of such a point—and of all its implications—just as his grandmother was once sure of Dhaka. Her long-desired return to that point killed Tridib (who said, after all, that knowledge comes through desire), a fact that leaves the narrator marooned in the present, "skilled in the art of recollection."

The Shadow Lines is a stunning novel, a rare work that balances formal ingenuity, heart, and mind. Throughout the novel Ghosh brings essentially philosophical issues into the reader's ken with a gentleness, a sweetness, that reflects the translucency of the narrator's character. Even as it readies itself for tragedy, the novel blushes with humor and the deftness of Ghosh's tongue. Though on a lesser scale than *The Circle of Reason*, *The Shadow Lines* is peopled with wonderful minor characters like Queen Victoria, which is what the narrator's family calls Ila's mother, a small, fat Indian woman. When Queen Victoria discovers a monitor lizard in her garden she bursts out in her best sergeant-major manner, "Damn and blast, there it was—a heck of a huge great big lizard, all gray and black, nasty great-big creature, with a little pointed head and a tongue like a bootlace, wandering about in my garden like a governor at a gymkhana." Such pearls disorient the narration and its fundamental seriousness not in the least: they merely deepen the impression of humanity that, in *The Shadow Lines* as well as in *The Circle of Reason*, has made Amitav Ghosh a novelist to reckon with at the age of 32.

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Let's Go

BY SARA MOSLE

Great Plains by Ian Frazier

(Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 290 pp., $17.95)

The exclamation mark has fallen into literary disrepute. When it appears in serious writing, it's usually to punctuate the expletives of urban dialogue or to undercut an elation it was once designed to provoke. Used sincerely, its enthusiasm seems naive, like an idealism we have long since outgrown. This makes the remarkable beginning of Ian Frazier's personal travelogue and anecdotal history of the Great Plains all the more striking. He doesn't simply use the exclamation mark (nine times in nine sentences in the very first paragraph), he brandishes it, like some ebullient tour guide with furled umbrella upraised, striding ahead and beckoning us along:

> Away to the Great Plains of America, to that immense Western short-grass prairie now mostly plowed under! Away to the still-empty land beyond newsstands and malls and velvet restaurant ropes! Away to the headwaters of the Missouri, now quelled by many impoundment dams, and to the headwaters of the Platte, and to the almost invisible headwaters of the slurped-up Arkansas! Away to the land where TV used to set its most popular dramas, but not anymore! . . .

Tugging against the Whitmanian enthusiasm of these lines is an undercurrent of sober observation: the prairies have been plowed under, the rivers have been slurped up. Frazier's invocation is too honest to be hokey; but it's too heartfelt to be simply ironic. He sweeps us "Away!" but where he takes us we could never go on our own. His is an imaginary landscape, where the past lies alongside the present. He leaves the exhausted literary terrain of the big city and suburban mall for "the still-empty land beyond." The expansiveness in these pages is not only a wide swath of space and sky, but of imagination and emotion.

In *Great Plains*, Frazier expresses something new (or rather, something very old) in writing. "Joy!" he identifies it with an exclamation mark almost 200 pages, a few years, and some 25,000 miles later, on a narrative journey that takes him "from Montana to Texas and back twice," as he stops at roadside museums, old trading posts, the hometown of Lawrence Welk, the site of Sitting Bull's Cabin and visits with Indians, hitchhikers, park rangers, and anybody else who will talk with him. Mostly his history is a sorrowful story of the prairies plundered and a people destroyed. Joy is an improbable emotion, and Frazier finds it in the most improbable of places: a town that a nearby museum says no longer exists, one of the several black townships founded by the many thousands of ex-slaves who migrated to the plains in the 1870s, only to die at rates as high as 50 a day in shantytowns outside the cities that were reluctant to welcome them.

Expecting to find "a few foundations by the roadside," he is surprised to discover—like Brigadoon in the Scottish mist—Nicodemus, Kansas, (pop. 50) very much alive and bustling with activities as it prepares for, among other things, its Founder's Day parade. Here, while watching the six Robinson sisters—Kathleen, Karen, Kaye, Kolleen, Krystal, and Karmen—breakdance to a song by Prince, Frazier suddenly experiences "a joy so strong it could have knocked me down." The sheer implausibility of this emotion, found in a "town with reason enough to hold a grudge, with plenty of reasons not to exist at all," gives rise, if only for a mo-

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What are the facts?

■ In order properly to assess the political realities in the Middle East, it is important to realize that the conflict between Palestinian Jews (Israelis) and Palestinian Arabs is not the core of the Arab/Israel problem. It is only a side issue. The main event, the core of the problem, is the unrelenting effort on the part of some Arab states to defeat Israel militarily, to dismantle (what they call) the "Zionist entity." That effort has been unceasing since the creation of Israel in 1948, and has given rise to five major wars. With the exception of Egypt, which finally concluded peace with Israel in the Camp David Accords, most other Arab states are still in a state of war with Israel. All Arab states are participants in the world-wide boycott of Israel, which has as its purpose the economic strangulation of that country. The Covenant of the PLO, which cannot be voided by a casual word by its chairman, makes the "liberation of all of Palestine"—and that, of course, includes the state of Israel—its primary goal and ultimate purpose.

■ Since the beginning of the so-called "intifada," Israel has spared no effort to control and appease that uprising, with as little loss of life and injury as possible. It is likely that this very concern for human life is the reason that the situation is not yet under control. One cannot help but compare the Israeli way of handling civil disturbance with the "effective and efficient" method of the Chinese, who watched *their* dissenters for a week and then restored "order" by ruthlessly killing several thousand citizens; or with the Syrians, who when the citizens of Hama defied the regime of President Assad, killed about 20,000 of their own people in one quick operation; or with the Iraqis, who poison-gassed 4,000 of their own Kurdish citizens, whom they suspected of "disloyalty" and chased over 10,000 survivors over the frontier into Turkey and Iran. Israel is prepared to make far-ranging concessions to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs. Such accommodations, however, can only be made after order has been restored. Also, a final settlement could only take place in the context of peace—not just with the Palestinian Arabs, but with the Arab states themselves, especially, the so-called "confrontation states"—Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Libya.

■ Unfortunately, while there is constant clamor for Israel to make "sacrifices for peace," no such requests are being made of any of the Arab countries. Nor has any Arab country come forward offering to change its stance toward Israel, even if the Palestinian conflict were settled. A good beginning, for instance, could be made by the Arab states denouncing and rejecting the infamous equation that "Zionism = Racism," by rescinding the economic boycott against Israel, and by public declaration that peace negotiations with Israel could start simultaneously with the effort to address and resolve the Palestinian problem. Any cessation of territory or even of administrative control over the territories would fatally weaken the already precarious military situation of Israel—unless it were in the context of a comprehensive peace settlement with all of the Arab countries.

■ In spite of these difficulties, and in spite of the unrelenting hostility of the Arab states, Mr. Shamir, Prime Minister of Israel, has presented a comprehensive Peace Initiative. The peace with Egypt, based on the Camp David Accords, should serve as the cornerstone for this Initiative, enlarging the circle of peace in the region. It calls for the extension of that peace through continued consultation. Israel, in its Initiative, calls for an international endeavor to resolve the problems of the residents of the Arab refugee camps—slums that have been perpetuated for over 40 years. Israel wishes to improve the living conditions of these people and to rehabilitate them. It wishes to be an active partner in this humanitarian enterprise. The most important step of this Initiative, are full and democratic elections in the territories, so that the inhabitants of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), and of the Gaza district can elect representatives with whom negotiations for a 5-year transitional period can be held. During this period, options for a permanent solution will be examined and peace between Israel and Jordan will be achieved. Negotiations for such permanent solution shall begin as soon as possible, but not later than the third year of the transitional period.

The above is of course, only the barest outline of Israel's Peace Initiative. It is the first viable peace plan ever offered. It is the expression of the yearning for peace of the people of Israel and of its desire to make peace with its neighbors, to build a Jewish homeland without the ever-present specter of war, and in the hope of being able to play its role in the development of the entire region. In order to begin with the first phase—free democratic elections in the territories—it is obvious that tranquility has first to be restored. The Israelis, unwilling of course to use Chinese, Syrian or Iraqi methods of "restoring order," have so far been unable to do it. But the Arab governments, by expressing *their* desire for peace and by supporting Israel's Peace Initiative could do so practically overnight. And the Arab states could further signal *their* desire for peace by declaring their willingness to enter peace negotiations with Israel, by renouncing and rejecting the slanderous equation that "Zionism=Racism," and by ending the economic boycott against Israel. Thus, Israel's Peace Initiative, being accepted by the Palestinian Arabs and finding echo with the Arab governments, could be the first step toward a just and permanent peace in an area of the world that hasn't known it for decades.

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ment, to a vision of a different kind of America, rendered in the book's second, and only other, burst of exclamation marks:

> I thought, *It could have worked!* This democracy, this land of freedom and equality and the pursuit of happiness—it could have worked! There was something to it after all! It didn't have to turn into a greedy free-for-all! We didn't have to make a mess of it and the continent and ourselves! . . . So many black people here on the blue-eyed Great Plains was like a cool drink of water. . . . For a moment I could imagine the past rewritten, wars unfought, the buffalo and Indians undestroyed, the prairie unplundered.

It's a testament to the powers of Frazier's writing, to how far he has swept us "Away," that the reader doesn't blush with embarrassment at his effusiveness. Frazier seems as surprised and grateful for his discovery as we are: "Thoughts which usually shout down joy in me were nowhere in sight. . . . Joy like this is so rare in me as to be endangered." In this very small town for a very brief moment, Frazier envisions an imaginative "home," where the idea of America, usually lost in the reality, suddenly reappears. His vision is not nostalgia. Notice it is the present that enables him to see "the past rewritten," not the other way around. When Frazier writes "Once . . . ," he is stating a possibility.

What Frazier locates in Nicodemus becomes the emotional center of his book, serving as an imaginative counterweight to the rest of the very real and sad history he tells with care and with understated incredulity, and above all with a humor that makes it even sadder. Of the American Fur Company's inexplicable and disastrous decision, for example, not to vaccinate its Indian customers against smallpox, Frazier writes, "Here in the wilderness they had falcon bells from Leipzig, French fabrics, gin from Holland, capers, almonds, ketchup by the quart—but no smallpox vaccine. . . . Afterwards the company increased its small trade in Indian skulls."

His narrative snapshots come with a kind of double exposure. When Frazier visits one of the nearly 2,000 missile silos that lay buried on the plains, he writes, "To the eye, it is almost nothing, just one or two acres of ground with a concrete slab in the middle and some posts sticking up behind an eight-foot cyclone fence; but to the imagination, it is the end of the world." This double vision is characteristic, but the end of the world stays, where it must, off stage. Frazier sticks to more fathomable territory, attending an annual open house of a nucle-

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ar missile base, where people ask questions like "How do you fire one of these things?" and "How much does all this stuff cost?" and where he notices that "no matter how high tech things get, there is always a big cable lying around." The observation in *Great Plains* is always human, even when the imagination might soar higher.

At first glance Frazier's narrative seems deceptively freewheeling, nothing more than a rambling journey engagingly told. But soon patterns begin to emerge, like highway billboards that point out the same roadside attraction every two or three miles. When he meets Crazy Horse's grandson, Le War Lance, for instance, on a street corner in New York City, Frazier gives him directions to Astor Place, named after John Jacob Astor, the owner of the American Fur Company who was indirectly responsible for the needless deaths of War Lance's ancestors. In his endnotes, Frazier points out that part of Astor's fortune "went toward the eventual creation of the New York Public Library, where I read of his greed."

Frazier's history of the plains is necessarily personal, because facts, though he gives us plenty, can't tell the whole story. To account adequately for the overwhelming reverence with which some Indians and non-Indians regard Crazy Horse, Frazier resorts to the first person. "Personally, I love Crazy Horse," he writes, beginning a long litany:

> because even the most basic outline of his life shows how great he was; because he remained himself from the moment of birth to the moment he died . . . because he never rode a train, slept in a boarding-house, ate at a table; because he never wore a medal or a top hat or any other thing that white men gave him; because he made sure his wife was safe before going to where he expected to die . . . because no photograph or painting or even sketch of him exists; because he is not the Indian on the nickel, the tobacco pouch, or the apple crate. . . . Now, in the mind of each person who imagines him, he looks different.

Instead of telling us exactly who Crazy Horse was, Frazier tells us who he was not. His description, specific as it is, is not exhaustive. Frazier paints a portrait of broad contours, leaving plenty of room for myth and memory to color in.

Despite the "I" above, we learn blessedly little about Frazier himself in *Great Plains*, yet the landscapes he describes are still very much his own. His plains can talk and their voice is Frazier's, infused with his own sense of humor and decency. When he describes a "buffalo drop," a cliff over which Indians used to drive herds to slaughter, he notes, "On the spot where so many buffalo would have landed and died, almost no grass grows, maybe out of tact." But the tact here isn't the ground's, it's Frazier's for remembering and mourning the dead. He gives the Great Plains—and their history—character.

Great Plains does have its facts, but Frazier treats them with a quiet reverence rather than a slavish devotion. He collects proper names and nouns as an archaeologist might gather arrowheads or bones. At every gas station he stops in, he asks the name of the local high school team. While listening to the radio, he keeps track of songs that include the words "Hold On" in the title. He lists the names of rivers (The River That Scolds at All the Others) and roads (The Go-to-the-Sun-Highway). He names the various tribes of the Sioux—Oglala, Miniconjou, Oohenonpa—wonderful, open, multisyllabic words with vowel-consonant ratios approaching one to one. He notes the different varieties of prairie grasses: bluestem, sandreed, and eriogonum. At one point Frazier returns to the site of Sitting Bull's Cabin just "to make sure the trees over the monument were actually bur oaks." This commitment goes far beyond the fact checker's adherence to journalistic detail. For Frazier, names are more than facts, they are the sacred artifacts of a people and a history. Getting them wrong would be worse than inaccurate; it would be impious.

At one point Frazier recounts how the Kiowa Indians, "when they left a campground they especially liked, would leave strings of beads or little pouches behind, as a 'gift to the place.' " One can't help but think of Frazier's book as a similar act of homage, his own gift to the plains. But behind his praise lies a heartfelt petition. "I fear for the Great Plains," he writes, "because many people think they are boring. Money and power in this country concentrate elsewhere. . . . And in truth," he admits, "parts of the plains are a little on the monotonous side."

But to those who find only "winsome landscapes" beautiful, Frazier counters, "The beauty of the plains is not just in themselves but in the sky, in what you think when you look at them, and in what they are not." They are what we make of them, a telling measure of our own imaginations. For reasons more profound than conservation, Frazier deplores strip-mining, which leaves "not ruins, but ruin" in its wake. The distinction is important. Like an unread page torn out of a book, Frazier writes, "Strip-mined land is land thrown away. . . . Of a place where the imagination could move at will backward and even forward through time, strip-mining creates a kind of time prison," its history and its language lost forever. "Even after 'reclamation,' " he notes, strip-mined land "gives you no year to think about but the year when the stripping happened." Frazier's quest in *Great Plains*, and his exhilarating accomplishment, is to free the imagination from this time prison.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

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Peacetime Economy

To the editors:

Murray Sayle suggests that "the proof" that liberal, free-trade capitalism is the wrong route to economic growth lies in the fact that we used bureaucratic allocation and central planning during World War II to accomplish our goal ("Axis, Ltd.," June 5). But he overlooks an elementary distinction: winning a war is a concrete goal in a way that economic growth just isn't. Sure, when one objective (defeating the Axis powers) must be met by an entire country, central coordination of some sort may be necessary. But growth isn't like war-winning: it can only be achieved in spite of militarized, "centrally coordinated, illiberal capitalism." Growth occurs when there is rational allocation of resources; it is fostered by free markets. When many different people have many different goals, it's liberal capitalism that furthers their fulfillment, maximizes economic growth, and (not coincidentally) raises our standard of living above—just for instance—that of Japan. Granted, Adam Smith may not apply in wartime, but at least he understood that there is such a thing as peacetime.

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The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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HOLLAND DIARIST

CS

FOLKS IN GDANSK, BUDAPEST, AND Leiden may suffer from Bushmania—they lined the streets and cheered for the guy, at any rate—but the American press has still got Gorbo fever. Bush aides (and presumably the president too) were irritated that after Bush had spent four days in Eastern Europe and three in France, questions about Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev dominated his press conference in Paris on July 16. "Six questions on Gorbachev," huffed a White House aide, the implication being that six out of 18 was too many. Gorbo had sent a letter the day before saying the Soviet Union wants to join the world economic community. That's a laugh. Still, the first question to Bush was whether Gorbachev would be invited to next year's summit, probably in San Antonio. Bush said no, which lead to a follow-up about whether Bangladesh would be asked. No again.

THE WHITE HOUSE WAS PARTLY to blame. Bushies had invited comparisons of Bush's reception in Poland and Hungary with Gorbachev's in West Germany in June. For the record, Bush and Secretary of State James Baker said the president wasn't competing. But of course he was. This was reinforced by the reaction of John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, to press reports that crowds were small and unenthusiastic on Bush's first stop in Warsaw. Sununu used the expression "CS" in referring to Terry Hunt of the Associated Press, who'd written a story to this effect. Word spread among reporters that Sununu had called Hunt a . . . well, if you can't figure it out, you shouldn't be reading this. Sununu explained that he meant the Hunt piece was a "cheap shot." Anyway, Sununu's complaint reflected White House concern over the absence of Bushmania in Warsaw. But Warsaw is a special case, a town that wouldn't get excited if Elvis appeared. While in Warsaw, I heard the story about two travelers by train, one going from Paris to Moscow, the other from Moscow to Paris. By mistake, they both get off in Warsaw and both figure they've arrived in the right place. For an American, the only nice thing about Warsaw is that you always have enough money. The U.S. Embassy exchanged money at the black market rate (5,000 zlotys to the dollar, not 800). I got 100,000 zlotys and found I couldn't spend them all. I went to the most elegant shopping area and couldn't find anything to buy. I had one big meal: 6,000 zlotys, including tip. I left Poland with 70,000 zlotys. A pocketful of zlotys brings new meaning to the expression "non-convertible currency." You not only can't convert it into other currencies. You can't even convert it into anything worth buying.

THE SECRET OF JOURNALISTS covering the president overseas is that they practically never see him. Bush spent four days in Paris, and most reporters caught one glimpse—at the press conference on the grounds of the American ambassador's residence. Reporters spend their time at a press center in some hotel, waiting for briefings, press releases, and pool reports from small groups of journalists allowed to spot Bush at each event. The trick is to make your stories sound as though you've been chatting with him or his senior aides at length every day. The pool reports are often mind-bogglingly uninformative. The one from reporters aboard Air Force One from Paris to Amsterdam began: "Your pool saw no sign of Bush, [Press Secretary Marlin] Fitzwater, et al." Another pool that staked out Bush for four hours during the Paris summit reported that it "saw a glimpse of the president on television smiling." Even when Bush is spotted, the result usually isn't much. When he left a state dinner in Budapest on July 11, pool reporters asked Bush how he was doing, having given away his raincoat. "It's not going to rain anymore," he said. "It's not going to rain on our parade." Stop the presses. I was on one pool in Paris, and I saw Bush for roughly a minute. Most of that was at Orly Airport, where he walked off his plane and into a limo. Then I waited outside Elysée Palace for about 90 minutes. Bush finally showed up and was met at the limo door by some French flunkie, who escorted him to the palace doorway, where French President François Mitterrand stepped out to greet him. The two turned to pose for the TV cameras and photographers in the pool for two seconds before walking inside and out of sight.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TOOK a drubbing from Margaret Thatcher at the Paris summit, but it wasn't quite as bad as the guillotining of Marxism on the Bush trip. At Karl Marx University in Budapest, Bush spoke in a hall dominated by a twice-life-size bronze statue of the great man. During the speech, it was obscured behind the camera platform. TV technicians climbed in Marx's lap and made fun of him. In his speech, Bush gloated that *Das Kapital* isn't required reading at dear old KMU anymore. This prompted Condoleezza Rice, the Soviet expert at the National Security Council, to say, "*Das Kapital* may not be on the reading list at Karl Marx University, but it's still a major item at Stanford." She was a professor at Stanford before going to the White House. Rice was also with Bush in Gdansk as he addressed a Solidarity crowd of 25,000 people who chanted, "Solidarity, Solidarity" from time to time during the speech. In other words, a throng of workers united. "This is what Karl Marx had in mind," said Rice, "but it didn't work out that way."

GEORGE BUSH'S HONEYMOON with the press rolls on, but Barbara Bush's may soon grind to a halt. For the first time, there was grousing among reporters about the First Lady. After Bush's press conference in Paris, he invited reporters into the ambassador's residence for a 20-minute tour. The impromptu invitation caused Mrs. Bush to say, in earshot of the press, "I don't believe you're doing this." She added that reporters could come in so long as "they took off their shoes and washed their feet." That wasn't her only offense. On Air Force One, flying from Budapest to Paris, she dropped by the press pool (in the rear of the plane) for a chat. Her timing was bad. Her husband had just given a 20-minute interview, and the poolers were madly trying to transcribe his remarks. Asked about Poland, she told the reporters, "We don't do what you do. . . . I know the press spends all their time shopping. . . . I'm telling the truth." She wasn't. The press spends only half its time shopping. Mrs. Bush ought to worry for two reasons. One is that the press has manic-depressive tendencies. It's either too high on you, or too low. There's no middle range. The other is that her husband is so popular that reporters feel uncomfortable pounding him. They need a surrogate, a stand-in whipping boy. Only one thing can save Mrs. Bush, and his name is Quayle.

THE FRENCH AND DUTCH KNOW how to treat the press. It's very simple: offer them something free. (The most hated phrase in journalism is "cash bar.") For the summit at the ugly, new Arche de la Defense, the French offered food and wine from five regions of France, plus Japanese food, all free. The sponges in the press, which is most of us, flocked to the place. In Holland, the Amsterdam city government and chamber of commerce invited reporters for a boat ride with "free food and drink." Four boatloads showed up. The trip around the city's canals turned out to be boring, and the food was cold cuts. Don't ask how I know this.

FRED BARNES

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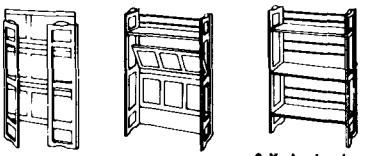

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